

FRANZ GABRIEL NAUEN

FRANZ GABRIEL NAUEN

REVOLUTION, IDEALISM AND HUMAN FREEDOM:

SCHELLING HÖLDERLIN AND HEGEL AND THE CRISIS
OF EARLY GERMAN IDEALISM

Directors: P. Dibon (Paris) and R. Popkin (Univ. of California, La Jolla)
Editorial Board: J. Aubin (Paris); J. Collins (St. Louis Univ.); P. Costabel (Paris);
A. Crombie (Oxford); I. Damska (Cracow); H. de la Fontaine-Verwey (Amsterdam);
H. Gadamer (Heidelberg); H. Gouhier (Paris); T. Gregory (Rome); T. E. Jessop (Hull);
P. O. Kristeller (Columbia Univ.); Elisabeth Labrousse (Paris); S. Lindroth (Upsala);
A. Lossky (Los Angeles); J. Orcibal (Paris); J. Roger (Paris); H. Rowen (Rutgers Univ.,
N.Y.); I. S. Révah (Paris); G. Sebba (Emory Univ., Atlanta); R. Shackleton (Oxford);
J. Tans (Groningen); G. Tonelli (Pise).

REVOLUTION, IDEALISM AND HUMAN FREEDOM:

SCHELLING HÖLDERLIN AND HEGEL AND THE CRISIS
OF EARLY GERMAN IDEALISM

by

FRANZ GABRIEL NAUEN



MARTINUS NIJHOFF / THE HAGUE / 1971

© 1971 by Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, Netherlands
Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 1971
*All rights reserved, including the right to translate or to
reproduce this book or parts thereof in any form*

ISBN-13:978-94-010-3035-9 e-ISBN-13:978-94-010-3033-5
DOI:10.1007/978-94-010-3033-5

CONTENTS

PREFACE	vii
CHAPTER I: Setting	1
CHAPTER II: Schelling (1792–1796)	27
CHAPTER III: Hölderlin (1789–1798)	50
CHAPTER IV: Hegel (1792–1800)	69
CHAPTER V: Hölderlin and Hegel (1799–1800)	86
BIBLIOGRAPHY	98

P R E F A C E

In this study I will present the intellectual development of Schelling, Hölderlin and Hegel during their formative years. Because of their similar social origins, the early thought of these young Swabians, during the 1790's, should be treated as a unit. Their experience as roommates at the *Stift* in Tübingen and their close intellectual fellowship throughout the nineties made each extremely responsive to the others ideas. As members of the political elite in Württemberg, their intellectual assumptions were profoundly affected by the crisis of Württemberg and German political society and by the events of the French Revolution in a way explicable only in the light of their Swabian heritage. So, for example, seen in the context of Hölderlin's and Schelling's thinking, the genesis of Hegel's earliest mature philosophical assumptions appears to be not so much an event in the history of philosophy as a specific solution to the problems raised by the crisis of his society.

The crucial role of Hölderlin in the history of German Idealism should also become apparent as a result of this study. For reasons developed in the following, Hölderlin's thinking bridged the gap not only between Kantianism and the new philosophy, which was to come to fruition in Hegel's mature thought, but also between the republican and the nationalist phase in the history of German political thought.

While, however, I hope that the following will contribute to our understanding of the mature thought of Hegel and Schelling, I have with some reluctance limited this study to the evolution of the thought of Schelling, Hölderlin, and Hegel during the nineties, partially for substantive and partially for philological reasons. Just because their emerging mature thought should be seen as a response by three former student radicals to the crisis of Württemberg and German republicanism, it would do injustice to the story of the evolution of this commitment to attempt here a general history of German idealism. Also, in sharp con-

trast to the nineties, neither the intellectual exchange between Hölderlin, Hegel and Schelling nor the specifics of the crisis of Württemberg and German politics play a crucial role in the development of Hegel's and Schelling's thought after 1800. Finally, the manuscripts which record Hegel's and Schelling's development after 1800 still have not been adequately prepared for the historian. All these considerations have led me to omit all but cursory reference to texts written after 1800. To do so would have necessitated facile comparisons out of keeping with the complexity of the record and the context of their development after 1800.

The *terminus ad quem* of this study is therefore not Hegel's *Phenomenology* or Schelling's *System des transzendentalen Idealismus*, but Hegel's prior decision in 1800, while still under the influence of Hölderlin, to collaborate with Schelling by becoming a professional philosopher concerned with discovering a new metaphysics which would be the key for social transformation.

Indeed this decision was made almost entirely within the context of his friendship with Schelling and Hölderlin. The relevance of Hegel's Swabian heritage to his philosophizing has been largely obscured by the fact that Hegel's earliest published writings on philosophy, which appeared in the first decade of the nineteenth century, were polemics against Kant, Fichte, and eventually Schelling. Hegel's prior decision, however, to engage in philosophical work, which set the tone for his subsequent development, was not only a response to the writings of Kant and Fichte but his own solution – affected profoundly by his friendship with Schelling and especially Hölderlin – to the specifically Swabian question of how to resolve the impasse of Württemberg and Imperial politics.

In this context it must be stressed that Hegel's early politics, while patriotic, were libertarian and must be distinguished from the "nationalist" patriotism of Fichte's later years which was a consequence of his disillusionment with and ensuing contempt for the totality of the French revolutionary experience. Fichte's politics during the nineties while he was still an apologist for the French Revolution were characterized by a moral rigorism far afield from the emphasis on harmony and integration which colored Schelling's, Hegel's, and Hölderlin's vision. Perhaps this is why Hegel decided after his philosophical conversion in 1800 to collaborate with Schelling, whose occasional views on politics conformed to his own, rather than with Fichte whose politics were both too authoritarian and abstract to be a real key to the immediate transformation of the state and society. In contrast to Fichte or Kant, political conscious-

ness – an awareness that ideas must serve politics and not the reverse – is the hallmark of Schelling's earliest writings, Hölderlin's entire work, and the characteristic contribution of Hegel to classical idealism.

In preparing this study, I have relied almost exclusively on obscure secondary works, usually of an "antiquarian" character, for social and political background. All discussions of ideas, however, have been based on a close exegesis of primary texts. The best critical editions of the published and unpublished writings and letters of Schelling, Hölderlin, Hegel, Kant, Fichte, Schiller and Lessing have been consulted.

I would like to thank my friend, H. Stuart Hughes, for his constant encouragement and abiding good will. I also wish to express my fathomless gratitude to Henry Tudor and Rena Nauen for helping me see that the pursuit of this study was the only sincere thing for me to do at this stage of my career.

CHAPTER I

SETTING

Hegel, perhaps the most self-questioning of all philosophers, was well aware that his thought was a response to intense social dislocation. It was "only after the power of life" had "gone out of human life that the need for philosophy" arose.¹ And indeed, as we shall see, Hegel's mature philosophy emerged out of the ruins of his original dream that society could once again unite men in freedom and dignity. This dream continued to haunt Hegel, permeating much of his mature writing, at times even vitiating his own explicit judgements on politics.²

In Hegel's later political thought it was the dialectic between the state and civil society which partially revealed and partially concealed his preference for a more harmonious and integrated society than that described

¹ G. W. F. Hegel, *Differenz des Fichte'schen und Schelling'schen Systems der Philosophie*, G. Lasson ed. (Hamburg, 1962), 14.

² See Livio Sichirollo, "Hegel und die Griechische Welt" and Otto Pöggeler, "Hegel und die Griechische Tragödie" in *Hegel Studien*, Beiheft I. (Bonn, 1964), 264-283. Hegel in his mature writings, did of course preach the virtue of political acquiescence, even quiescence. George Kelly is however wrong in identifying Hegel's conservatism with his more basic insistence on "concreteness," i.e. this worldliness and denial of "otherness," i.e. of Fichtean Idealism. See G. A. Kelly, *Politics, Idealism and History*, Cambridge, 1969, esp. 304-306. Hegel had already rejected egocentric idealism by 1800 when he wrote his "Preface" for his "German Constitution." At this time, when he chose philosophy as his vocation, Hegel was however still concerned primarily with discovering a science for social and political revolution. See *post* Chapter IV. It was during the following decade as he witnessed the striking successes of Napoleon that Hegel first began to stress the virtue of political obedience. And it was only during his stay in Berlin after 1818 that, fatigued by the revolutionary experience, he made his peace with the traditional German state. Still Hegel's earlier radicalism survived in his later writings as an explicit underlying motif permeating his entire philosophy with a dynamism otherwise inexplicable; see Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, Boston, 1960, 15-16. After all, not only the left-wing Hegelians but even Frederick William IV believed that Hegel's philosophy was inherently revolutionary, *ibid.* 362. The following study however is concerned solely with discovering the rich background for Hegel's decision to engage in philosophical work. A discussion of his changing explicit judgments on politics during the early nineteenth century must wait for further research possible only when Hegel's unpublished writings of the Jena period have appeared in the new critical edition of Hegel's works.

under the rubric of "civil society" in his *Philosophy of Law*.³ Hegel in his maturity believed that "civil society" was a reality which it was the business of the philosopher to comprehend.⁴ But though he insisted in a number of key passages that philosophy and citizenship were the royal roads whereby intellectual and ordinary men could learn to endure the paradoxes of their own concrete experiences in modern society, Hegel maintained his personal nostalgia for earlier societies in which free men had been able to develop their faculties in freedom while participating fully in something more meaningful and more lofty than their own personal experiences.⁵

It was the unsatisfying and unconvincing quality of Hegel's cult of the modern state, his obvious nostalgia for the harmonious and rational society of the Greeks, and his disdain for the anarchy and competitiveness of modern property-based society which enabled Marx, in spite of his early strictures against Hegel's "idealism", to arrive at his own early communist views largely on the basis of an internal criticism of Hegelian texts.⁶ This insistence – novel in the history of German political thought, but which has become one of the most vital values of modern politics – that society, or at least the state, be a dimension and not simply a precondition of human freedom – was shared by Hegel's closest friends during his twenties, Hölderlin and Schelling, who after rooming together at the University in Tübingen, continued throughout the 1790's to confide to one another their deepest intellectual concerns. Indeed this and other basic decisions which underlay Hegel's entire mature thought were made in this context of friends who shared common origins and mutual goals.⁷

Hölderlin, Hegel and Schelling were gentlemen, conscious from the onset of their rights and privileges as members of the patriciate of their society. Aware of their role in society, accustomed to being treated with respect, they searched for a new ideology for members of their own class. In keeping with their traditional position within Württemberg society, they believed that it was the role of the elite to be a vanguard of a new class of free men and not an aggregate of individuals who had found a way through reason to free themselves from the vicissitudes of experience.

³ G. W. F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, J. Hoffmeister, ed. (4th ed.) (Hamburg, 1962), 214-217, 165-207.

⁴ Hegel, *Grundlinien*, 16.

⁵ Cf. ante note 2; this nostalgia is apparent in Hegel's discussion of Ancient Greece in *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*. (Stuttgart, 1961), 320-388; of course Hegel was also aware of the failings of Greek society.

⁶ Marx relied heavily on Hegelian texts while writing the essays collected in Karl Marx, *Frühe Schriften*, H. J. Lieber and P. Furth ed. (Stuttgart, 1962), I.

⁷ Cf. Emil Staiger, *Der Geist der Liebe und das Schicksal, Schelling, Hegel und Hölderlin*. (Frauenfeld-Leipzig, 1935); Julius Klaiber, *Hölderlin, Hegel und Schelling in ihren schwäbischen Jugendjahren*, (Stuttgart, 1877).

Also, as graduates of the seminary in Tübingen, they were imbued not only with a pastoral calling to save mankind, but also with the awareness that they as members of the clergy were responsible for the ideologies which would express the values of their society. Though Hölderlin, Hegel and Schelling never became practising clergymen, they never lost the sense of belonging to a spiritual elite responsible for creating for the populace a sense of identity and vocation. Unlike Kant, Fichte and the circle of intellectuals at Weimar who were conscious of belonging to a small, cultural elite, Hölderlin, Hegel and Schelling were at first committed to revising radically the consciousness of the entire middle class in Württemberg.⁸

While idealists outside Württemberg, responding to the ideas of the French Revolution in the context of despotism, extended the domain of liberty from the ethical to the political sector by conceiving schemes whereby liberty would be contained by law, Hölderlin, Hegel and Schelling tried in their earliest writings to promote a revolution in the consciousness of the middle classes so that they might become worthy and capable of political freedom. These Swabians believed during their student years that the chief impediments of political freedom in their own society were not the laws but the servile attitudes of the citizenry, and they hoped that a new philosophy, religion and art would liberate men from their mental chains.⁹

Later, after the radical leaders of the middle classes in Württemberg had shown that they were unable to deal with the critical issues which faced their society, Hölderlin, Hegel and Schelling began to question the political effectiveness of their thinking on the immediate political situation. Each modified the universalism of his early position and came increasingly to envision political freedom as the outgrowth of the experience of a few free men. The elitism entailed by this metamorphosis at first seemed to them compatible with political radicalism. In the gloomy setting of unregenerate Germany, they jettisoned their practical commitment to revolution and reform. Still this vision of a free and harmonious society of spiritually free men continued to inform the thought of each of them throughout his life. And each in his own way, as philosopher or poet, adopted a private stance whereby this value could be preserved.¹⁰

⁸ Martin Hasselhorn, *Der Altwürttembergische Pfarrstand in 18. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart, 1958, (*Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Geschichtliche Landeskunde in Baden-Württemberg*, VI.)

⁹ Letter from Hölderlin to his brother, September, 1793, Hölderlin. *Grosse Stuttgarter Ausgabe*, F. Beissner ed. 6 vol. (Stuttgart, 1944-1962), VII, 92-93. (henceforth cited as *G.S.A.*) See also "Älteste Systemfragment des deutschen Idealismus," Franz Rosenzweig, *Kleinere Schriften*. (Berlin, 1937), 332-334.

¹⁰ Stripped of its historical context, this process of disillusionment is described by Emil Staiger, *op.cit.* The best discussion of the foreign policy of the Württemberg Estates is in Erwin Hölzle, *Das alte Recht und die Revolution* (Munich and Berlin, 1931),

Of all the thinkers of the older generation, only Schiller, by birth and education a Swabian, and Fichte, a Saxon of humble origins, shared with our three theological candidates the belief that spiritual rebirth was a prime precondition for social and political freedom. While Hölderlin, Hegel and Schelling, however, believed in the basic unity of ethics and politics, Fichte and Schiller thought that a good society was at best a setting for the sublime inner acts of moral man. Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Mankind*,¹¹ published in 1794 and 1795, purported to show how men might be made capable of truly moral acts through exposure to art.¹² In this work – which incidentally was immediately hailed as a masterpiece by Hölderlin, Hegel and Schelling – Schiller developed the thought which he had first presented to the German public in his poems, “The Gods of Greece” and “The Artist”: that the Greek experience, while irrevocably lost was nonetheless the only valid norm for politics and society.¹³ Social forces alone, characterized by the division of labor, were unable to achieve the total utilization of all human faculties which had characterized the more primitive social life of the Greeks; the artist, however, could impose harmony onto the modern social stage by utilizing the free phenomenon of play.¹⁴ Through the experience of play, modern man might free himself from the bondage of both his intellect and his senses and, in some measure, regain his innocence. If men were to become worthy of political freedom, they must be liberated through play from the impediments to their total growth imposed upon them by the division of labor.¹⁵

Our three young Swabian thinkers were unquestionably reinforced in their proclivity to think of the Greek experience as normative for modern politics by Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters*. Unlike Schiller, they did not intend either to chart an alternate course to freedom than political or social action or to set the stage for political and social changes in the remote future. Rather, Schelling, Hölderlin and Hegel believed that their efforts in theology, art and philosophy were the most potent means to encourage

117-124, 137, 228-249; cf. Jacques Droz, *L'Allemagne et la Révolution Française*. (Paris, 1949), 115-130.

¹¹ “Über die Ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen”, Friedrich Schiller, *Werke in Drei Bänden*. H. G. Göpfert ed. (Munich, 1966), II, 445-520.

¹² *Ibid.*, 503, 507-508.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 454, 462-465; for the response of Hölderlin, Hegel and Schelling to the *Letters* see the following: Letter from Hegel to Schelling, April 14, 1795, in *Briefe von und an Hegel*. J. Hoffmeister ed. 4. vol. (Hamburg, 1952-1954), henceforth cited as Hegel, *Briefe*; I, 25. Letter from Schelling to Hegel, July 21, 1795, Hegel, *Briefe*, I, 28; Letter from Hölderlin to Immanuel Niethammer, February 24, 1796, G.S.A. VI₁, 203.

¹⁴ Schiller, *Werke*, II, 457-459.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 494-499.

political change under the prevailing conditions.¹⁶ Indeed in this radicalism, our Swabian thinkers cannot be meaningfully compared with Schiller, who under the influence of Burke and Goethe had adopted a position hostile to the reformist and revolutionary movements in European society, but only to Fichte, who in his early works consciously conceived of his own philosophizing as an intellectual correlate to the actions undertaken by the revolutionaries in France.¹⁷

Of all the eminent philosophers of his age, Fichte was the most radical in his politics. Throughout the nineties he sided consistently with the French revolutionaries and even considered taking up a teaching position in Revolutionary France.¹⁸ More than any other German intellectual of his period he stressed that the proper place of the intellectual in politics was at the vanguard of reform. In his *Lectures on the Vocation of a Scholar*,¹⁹ published in 1794, Fichte claimed that the "true meaning" of society could be derived only from the end-historical condition in which man would achieve total mastery over things and complete harmony and equality with his fellow man.²⁰ Realizing, however, that this condition "could never be achieved by man unless he became God,"²¹ he argued that it was the vocation of the scholar under the prevailing conditions to act as a counterweight to the overspecialization resulting from the division of labor and teach men to regulate their social affairs so that they would be able, at least as a species, to develop all their faculties.²² Fichte's politics was the natural consequence of this vision of the role of the scholar as a corrective to the overspecialization characteristic of modernity. The destruction of despotism would end the suppression of freedom of thought and enable men to turn from their primitive war-making concerns to developing their culture by gaining power over things and increased respect for the human dignity of their fellows.²³ While Fichte remained throughout the nineties an advocate of reform and a partisan of the French revolution, he justified his politics by relating them to his rational construct of a totally power-

¹⁶ Goethe remarked that after the French Revolution what had been aspirations became demands; Hinrich Knittermeyer, *Schelling und die Romantische Schule*, (Munich, 1929), 15.

¹⁷ Klaus Epstein, *The Genesis of German Conservatism*, (Princeton, 1966), 449. The best biography of Fichte is Fritz Medicus, *Fichtes Leben*, Leipzig, 1914.

¹⁸ J. G. Fichte, *Briefwechsel*. Hans Schulz ed., 2 vol. (Leipzig, 1925), II, 524-528; cf. Medicus, *op. cit.* 100.

¹⁹ *Einige Vorlesungen über die Bestimmung des Gelehrten*, Jena and Leipzig, 1794, in *Ausgewählte Werke in sechs Bänden*, Fritz Medicus ed. (Leipzig, 1911-1912), I, 219-274.

²⁰ Fichte, *Werke*, I, 227-228.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, 255-256.

²³ *Ibid.*, 234-237.

ful and integrated society of identical rational free men which he realized would never be fully achieved, but only approximated after millenia of human history.²⁴

Though agreeing with Fichte's insistence on political reform, our Swabian theological candidates were unsatisfied with Fichte's vision whereby it was man's duty to strive constantly for an unattainable goal. Obsessed by the quest for a new way of thinking which would serve the forces of reform in their own society, they sought for spiritual realities which were already at hand in the mind or human history to justify such reforms.²⁵

Hölderlin, Hegel and Schelling were unquestionably influenced and inspired by Fichte and Schiller to search for political and cultural means to unite men divided in modern society by their specialized pursuits. They differed from these thinkers of the older generation by insisting that their solution, by constituting a new ideology for their own class in Württemberg, be of immediate relevance to the concrete political situation. The point of departure for the thought not only of the Swabian Idealists, but of Fichte and Schiller as well was the philosophy of Kant, unquestionably the greatest thinker of his age. I can think of no better way to conclude this introductory orientation of Swabian Idealism than by contrasting the political enthusiasm of Hölderlin, Hegel and Schelling with the cautions liberalism of Kant, who, while accepting modern society, did not conceive of political reform as a sublime spiritual consequence of a revolution in consciousness, but even in his most radical statements only as a precondition for meaningful moral growth on the part of isolated individuals.²⁶

By the beginning of the nineties, Kant was an old man who after having completed what he considered to be his life's work, a framework for human reason, in his three "Critiques", now found the leisure to work out some of the social and political implications of his earlier thinking.²⁷ While Kant's enthusiasm for the French Revolution played an important role in prompting him to devote much of his energies during the nineties to politics, the nature of his life's work made these political writings not only a profound response to the political situation, but also a testimony

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 234.

²⁵ Letters from Schelling to Hegel, January, 1795, Hegel, *Briefe*, I, 14; from Hölderlin to Hegel, January 26, 1795, *ibid.*, 19-20; from Hegel to Schelling, April 16, 1795, *ibid.*, 23.

²⁶ Cf. Leonard Krieger, *The German Idea of Freedom*, (Boston, 1957), 86-125.

²⁷ With the exception of "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung" and "Ideen zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlichen Absicht," written in 1784 and 1785, all of Kant's political writings were composed after the French Revolution.

of his unflagging faith in the possibility of reason coming to dominate human affairs. In part Kant's politics followed deductively from his ethical principles; in part they were a shrewd though often mistaken assessment of the contemporary political situation. Both his deductions and his observations merged in practical conclusions which purported to serve the individual rather than the collective whole. Politics was, therefore, conceived of not as the realization of collective morality but merely as the guardian of the moral and political freedom of individual persons.²⁸

In the first of his essays on politics, *Ideas for a Universal History in Cosmopolitan Intent*,²⁹ written in 1785, Kant had attempted to combine his view that human action was, in fact, not determined by the moral will, but by human passion, with his faith in the ultimate destiny of man to be truly free.³⁰ At this time Kant was unquestionably a proponent of enlightened despotism and believed that since, "man was an animal requiring a master,"³¹ he required a sovereign if he was to enjoy the freedom fully to develop his faculties.³² Though the prince also was an animal who required a master, he might be coerced by the *force majeure* of economic, social and moral progress to initiate political reforms.³³ Prompted by the increased importance of trade, the growing cost of war and the intellectual maturation of his citizens, he might institute changes which in time would transform his state from a predatory natural entity into a pacific, moral whole.³⁴

Before 1790, Kant had not believed that morals were effective in politics. In his ethical writings of the '80's and also in his *Ideas for a Universal History*, he had radically divorced the free will of moral man from the actual world of human affairs.³⁵ The free will of moral man was a cause not of actions but of intentions.³⁶ Actions were usually, if not always, the consequence of passions and circumstance and not of moral intent.³⁷ While human history as a whole was "meaningful" only if it concluded with a

²⁸ I. Kant, "Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis," *Werke in sechs Bänden*. Weischedel ed., 6 vol. (Frankfurt am Main, 1956-1964), VI, 144-145; cited hereafter as Kant, *Werke*.

²⁹ "Ideen zu einer allgemeiner Geschichte in Weltbürgerlichen Absicht," Kant, *Werke*, VI, 33-50.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, VI, 33, 34, 45.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, 46.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 47; see also "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung," *Werke*, VI, 53-61, esp. 61.

³⁵ *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*. (1785), *Werke*, IV, 11-102; esp. 34. The non-moral approach to politics in Kant's political writings of the eighties has been overemphasized by Krieger; see Krieger, *op. cit.* 93-94.

³⁶ Kant, *Werke*, IV, 19; see also *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*; *Werke*, II, 32.

³⁷ *Grundlegung*, *Werke*, IV, 36.

dominance of morality over politics in human life, the crucial moment when real political man ceased to be governed primarily by his instincts and evolved into a truly moral being had as yet not occurred.³⁸

It was the French Revolution which convinced Kant that moral factors did play a role, be it ever so slight, in political affairs.³⁹ The enthusiasm aroused by the French Revolution in "uninvolved spectators", proved to Kant that political man was not governed completely by self-interest, but was accessible to moral argument.⁴⁰ It was his new faith in the relevance of morals to politics which impelled Kant during the last decade of the 18th century to devote much of his energy to political thought and to a philosophy of law grounded securely in ethics.⁴¹

Still even after the French Revolution, Kant continued to distinguish sharply between the world of society and politics and the world of true morality. The free play of forces in civil society, released by political reform, would enable man to develop his reason; and eventually the development of intellect would predispose him to adapt a moral outlook towards the world.⁴² The state, on the other hand, through the discipline of just law and by eliminating war and enabling the individual to develop his faculties in freedom would offer a setting for moral growth. Nonetheless only the individual and not the law could ultimately be conceived of as an agent for moral growth.⁴³

Still if the French Revolution revealed a new moral dimension of politics and if the prince was really an „animal requiring a master", why did Kant indicate in countless passages his preference for government in which the laws were indeed legislated by representative bodies but executed solely by a single sovereign who stood above any constraint or coercive check? ⁴⁴ Unlike his young admirers and students in Tübingen for whom the connection between ethics and politics, between morality and the state, was integral and consequential, Kant was forced to consider their relation as one of analogy. In this way Kant was able to preserve a steady distinction between political and moral man and, despite his ethical injunctions of absolute freedom, to maintain his preference in the political sphere for monarchical forms of government.⁴⁶

³⁸ "Was ist Aufklärung," *Werke*, VI, 42, 50.

³⁹ "Der Streit der Fakultäten," (1798), *Werke*, VI, 267-393, esp. 356-357.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 357-360.

⁴¹ Cf. Krieger, *op. cit.*, 104-105.

⁴² "Theorie und Praxis" *Werke*, VI, 145-146, "Streit der Fakultäten" *ibid.*, 360-361.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 364-365; *Metaphysik der Sitten*, *Werke*, IV, 438.

⁴⁴ "Theorie und Praxis," *Werke*, VI, 159-160.

⁴⁵ "Streit der Fakultäten," *Werke*, VI, 324; I believe that the French Revolution convinced Kant to change the form but not the content of his political thought; cf. Krieger, *op. cit.*, 86-87.

In his first major contribution to ethical theory, his *Foundations for a Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant had construed a purely ideal "kingdom of ends" as an illustration of the social implications of his new philosophy of freedom. In this "kingdom" each free will could cooperate in co-legislating with all other members moral laws in accord with the Categorical Imperative. But as the chief philosophical import of Kant's moral philosophy was the autonomy of moral men in legislating moral law in accord with their freedom, it is somewhat surprising that Kant did not envision an imaginary ethical republic in which the laws stemming from each person's moral autonomy would necessarily constitute one collective supreme general will. Pushing into the background his prior insight that true morality presupposed freedom and individual autonomy, Kant speculated on a parallelism between the individual moral decisions of moral men and the laws stemming from a will, which unlike the moral will of men, was in no way thwarted by lusts, drives and sensuous appetites.⁴⁶

The moral laws stemming from the individual legislative acts of free moral men, instead of constituting of themselves a single ethical general will, were seen by Kant as identical with laws stemming from the freedom of one single Supreme Moral Being. Instead of envisioning a democracy of wills all contributing to the legislation of laws constitutive of ethical truth, Kant implied that the moral acts of individual wills, a dimension of human personality, were somehow imperfect unless they corresponded to the dictates of a pure will free of any of the alloy of the human condition.⁴⁷

Kant did not believe that his notion of a "kingdom of ends" was applicable to political society, which consisted not of moral wills but of men driven by their lusts and appetites.⁴⁸ But though Kant did not conceive of his ethical commonwealth as a model or even as a prototype of political society, his theories of sovereignty for ethics and politics were strikingly *similar*. The plenitude of moral power held by the "chief of the Kingdom of Ends" ⁴⁹ corresponded to the monopoly of coercive power held by the prince in political power, who like his ethical counterpart was simultaneously an agent of a general will.⁵⁰ And Kant's political monism, his insistence on strong authority to guarantee the liberty of individuals, corresponded to his ethical monism whereby moral men, as only a dimension of real men, required a purely Moral Being to integrate their individual moral decisions into one whole.

⁴⁶ *Grundlegung, Werke*, IV, 66-74.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, IV, 66-67.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, IV, 35.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, IV, 67.

⁵⁰ "Streit der Fakultäten," *Werke*, VI, 361.

The proper function of the state and its laws was to enable each person to find happiness in his own way by keeping the peace and arbitrating between citizens. It would be a despotic intrusion into the rights of an individual if the state should impose its conception of happiness on him or even force him to act in accord with the dictates of morality in matters which did not infringe on the liberties of others.⁵¹ This stubborn division between ethics and politics was not only a consequence of Kant's philosophy of human history, whereby the individual human being, striving to achieve happiness in his own way, might eventually be able to subdue his passions and act in accord with his innate moral freedom, but also a necessary consequence of the cardinal ethical injunction that, men were "to treat themselves not as means but as ends."⁵² Since Kant defined the state as coercive power and morality as the power to act autonomously, politics at best could not make men moral; it could only eliminate some impediments to moral growth and perhaps create a favorable climate for moral action.⁵³ Moral despotism, on the other hand, even of the majority, was for Kant the most pernicious enemy of freedom, exceeded only by lawlessness as a condition detrimental to true freedom.⁵⁴

But unlike morality, which was concerned with free wills which by definition respected the rights of others, politics dealt with men who if unchecked would certainly infringe on the rights of others.⁵⁵ In order to coexist in peace and freedom, men relegated their own right of self-defense to some sovereign who kept the peace through administering impartial law.⁵⁶ This alienation of man's individual right to protect himself from his neighbor was a presupposition of living in an orderly society. As such, this act of alienation was irrevocable and subjects had absolutely no rights against their sovereigns. For Kant, any act of rebellion against a sovereign undermined the entire social fabric, and was not only fundamentally "illegal", but violated the ethical injunction to obey the law so that men could exist in peace. Kant's denial of the rights of subjects to resist their sovereign was absolute: tyrannicide was an ethical sin, more heinous than murder.⁵⁷

Kant coordinated his liberal conception of what the state should achieve and his authoritarian theory of obligation by making obedience an immediate ethical duty binding on all men at all times and the creation of a "state of law" at first a function of historical progress, and later, in the

⁵¹ "Theorie und Praxis," *ibid.*, VI, 145-146.

⁵² *Metaphysik der Sitten, Werke*, IV, 309-614, esp. 344.

⁵³ "Streit der Fakultäten," *Werke*, VI, 365.

⁵⁴ "Theorie und Praxis," *Werke*, VI, 145-146, 159.

⁵⁵ *Metaphysik der Sitten, Werke*, IV, 430.

⁵⁶ "Theorie und Praxis," *Werke*, VI, 148, 156.

⁵⁷ *Metaphysik der Sitten, Werke*, IV, 438, note on 442.

political writings of the nineties, a duty incumbent on sovereigns under the Natural Law.⁵⁸ Perhaps the transition of politics from the "realm of nature" to the "realm of freedom" would take place at the end of history with the establishment of a "world federation of republican governments." Perhaps the French Revolution had already revealed a moral dimension to politics. In any case the only valid agents for political reform, according to Kant, were the existing sovereigns carrying out a policy of reforms in an evolutionary, not revolutionary, way.⁵⁹

Even after the French Revolution, Kant maintained his loyal though critical posture towards enlightened despotism. Though he now believed that the French Revolution had demonstrated a moral capability of men hitherto unknown in the world of experience, he continued to affirm that the legitimate sovereign of a state was the only legitimate agent for political reforms.⁶⁰ Political evolution was now for Kant a function not only of social progress but also of human morality. Kant believed that the moral fervor and altruism aroused by the French Revolution indicated to princes that political reform would not only be prudent but also in keeping with the actual moral capability and moral judgements of real men.⁶¹

Still, even in Kant's most radical writings of the 90's, he continued to affirm that subjects had no enforceable rights against their sovereigns. The only legitimate way in which a "republican" mode of government could be achieved would be through reforms enacted by the prince, aware of what philosophers were saying and responding to the growing capability of his subjects for political freedom.⁶² The moral enthusiasm aroused by the non-aggressive policy of revolutionary France should indicate to the prince the moral superiority of republicanism to the traditional predatory practices of absolutist government. Even the absolute monarch should henceforth act in accord with republican principles in so far as he was able. Rejecting revolution as a valid means to achieve reforms, Kant maintained that political reform in accord with republican principles was the only legitimate policy *vis a vis* the momentous occurrence of the French Revolution.⁶³

Though Kant insisted on the absolute ethical autonomy of each individual person and was highly critical of despotism for treating men as means and not as ends, he was impelled by the power of his image of

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, IV, 464.

⁵⁹ "Streit der Fakultäten," *Werke*, VI, 360.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 366.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 365.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 361.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 364-365.

sovereignty to give precedence to the rights of rulers over the rights of subjects. Both this illiberal bias in Kant's formal politics and his emphasis on the legitimate private concerns of individuals as the reality underlying legitimate politics precluded a lofty or comprehensive definition of political virtue either on the part of the citizen or on the part of the sovereign. Political man, citizen or sovereign, was not a free creative force in politics but served the needs of the individual in society by carrying out purely formal functions. The highest reaches of citizenship accessible to Kant were attained when men consented to the laws, understood themselves as ends and not as means, and shared a sense of possession of the land.⁶⁴

It is not surprising that Kant's political writings did not satisfy the yearning of Hölderlin, Hegel and Schelling, who were committed in their own state of Württemberg to the revival of political virtue and political freedom. Once again, as in the Renaissance, the most fruitful matrix for the emergence of new political ideas was a society responding to the challenge of despotism from without through a recrudescence of civic republicanism, stressing that the political virtue of its citizens was not only the sole means but also the sole moral justification for its survival.⁶⁵

The young Swabians were deeply interested in the debate inaugurated by Kant on the Natural Law; Hölderlin, in a letter to his brother written in 1797, was in raptures about this new science, which promised to be even more perfect than mathematics.⁶⁶ Hegel's early writings, after 1795, are full of allusions to Kant's political writings, and he applauded the new philosophy which would "convince men of their dignity" and tell them "to assume their rights".⁶⁷ And Schelling contributed to the genre of writings on the Natural Law in his "Neue Deduktion des Naturrechts".⁶⁸ Yet in spite of their enthusiasm for the new legal and political theory of the fathers of German idealism, constitutional and legal theory was only peripheral to the central concerns of the Swabian idealists.

Hölderlin, Hegel and Schelling were trained theologians who accepted the purpose if not the content of their theological vocation. In keeping with the traditional function of their calling, they were more concerned with changing the fundamental attitudes of the citizens than with altering legal

⁶⁴ "Theorie und Praxis," *Werke*, VI, 146.

⁶⁵ The heuristic importance of the work of Baron and Meinecke for this study should be obvious; cf. Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*, 2 vol., Princeton, 1955, and Friedrich Meinecke, *Die Idee der Staatsräson in der neueren Geschichte*, Munich and Berlin, 1924.

⁶⁶ Letter from Hölderlin to his brother, January 10, 1796, G.S.A., VI₁, 231.

⁶⁷ Letter from Hegel to Schelling, April 16, 1795, Hegel, *Briefe*, I, 23.

⁶⁸ "Neue Deduktion des Naturrechts," (1795), *Schellings Werke*, Manfred Schröter, ed. (Munich, 1927) I, 169-204.

theory or practice. Like Kant they tended to emphasize the priority of the idea of human freedom over the concrete manifestations of this freedom in the state and society. Unlike Kant, however, they envisioned human freedom as a precondition for political freedom and not as an "end in itself." Unwilling to identify their vision of freedom with existing or even potentially realizable bodies of human law, they tried to liberate the consciousness of the citizen through a new philosophy, religion and poetry so that he would be capable of true social, political and spiritual freedom.⁶⁹

Emphasizing the primacy of libertarian ideas over political or legal change, our young Swabians originally conceived of philosophical revolution as the overture to meaningful political revolution.⁷⁰ In marked contrast to Idealists outside Württemberg, especially Kant, Fichte and Schiller, they conceived of human freedom in political and social and not in moral terms. Schelling originally conceived of the new philosophy of freedom, heralded by Fichte, as the harbinger to a new age of freedom in which reason would structure the social world of man and in which moral law would be as certain and effective as physical laws were already.⁷¹ Hölderlin envisioned a new society, which like the society of ancient Greece, would provide a setting for the life of a sound and integrated free people.⁷² And Hegel sought the principles for a new religion, which by overcoming the modern emphasis on private aims, would inspire enthusiasm for political virtue, and so enable men to involve themselves fully in the larger collective ventures of their country.⁷³

For these Swabians, the freedom of Greek antiquity was not a fantasy or a myth, but a paradigm for their own political aims. Living in a society largely agrarian in its pursuits, and led not by a feudal nobility, but by a politically conscious, cohesive and vigorous, "middle class", Hölderlin, Hegel and Schelling identified the social structure of their own society with the social structure which had served as the base of the lofty cultural and human achievements of the Greeks. Here, in this rustic, somewhat backward society, nostalgia for Greek conditions did not involve an intentional repudiation of the existing social structure. And in Württemberg, the impediments to communal, collective action did in fact seem to be primarily political and ideological, rather than social in nature.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ See *ante* note 9.

⁷⁰ Letter from Hegel to Schelling, April 16, 1795, Hegel, *Briefe*, I, 23; cf. Staiger, *op. cit.*, 9-30.

⁷¹ *Schellings Werke*, I, 82.

⁷² Cf. Georg Lukács, *Goethe und seine Zeit*, (Bern, 1947), 110-126.

⁷³ *Hegels theologische Jugendschriften*, Herman Nohl, ed. (Tübingen, 1907), 19; henceforth cited as *Nohl*.

⁷⁴ During the nineties no social reform of any kind was suggested on any occasion

During the eighteenth century, the clerics in most of the territories of Germany were loyal and obedient subjects of their absolute princes. In Württemberg alone, the clergy were conscious of enjoying political rights against their sovereign, which were part of the ancient and venerable liberties enjoyed by the middle classes in this unusual society, where the political order was based on a charter between the middle classes and the prince.⁷⁵ Elsewhere in the Germanies, the prince, assisted by his bureaucracy and by a docile aristocracy, ruled according to his pleasure, with little interference from below. In Württemberg, however, the duke was constrained by the inalienable political rights of the Estates of the Duchy, which here did not consist of an assemblage of feudal nobility, but exclusively of "middle class men", who since the Reformation had sided with authority against the threat of peasant unrest.⁷⁶ And in Württemberg alone the Estates were able not only to maintain their traditional prerogative, but to see them guaranteed in 1770 by a solemn pact between the duke and the Estates.⁷⁷

Still, it would be totally erroneous to see in this German speaking non-noble gentry an infant capitalistic class or even bourgeoisie akin to that of Paris, London or the German Free Cities. Rather, the *Ehrbarkeit* of Württemberg were people who traditionally drew their income from magisterial and bureaucratic office in the Duchy. At the apex of those represented in the Estates stood the *Honoratioren*, families who for centuries had monopolized high office in the Duchy. The Württemberg clergy as a whole belonged to this highly exclusive sub-class, which carefully maintained its prestigious isolation both from the lower echelons of the *Ehr-*

by Hölderlin, Hegel or Schelling. Still the Greek *polis* appealed to the young Swabians not only because of its cultural achievements but because it was a model for their own vision of a society based on freedom and capable of defending itself against its enemies. Swabian Hellenism must therefore be distinguished from the Hellenism of Goethe or Schiller during their Weimar years which was based entirely on an assessment of the Greek cultural and ethical achievement. This is true even of Hegel's later writings; the highly politicized notion of *Sittlichkeit* as it appears in Hegel's *Phenomenology* (1807) is quite different from the purely ethical import of Goethe's *Iphigenie*. This difference which is even more striking in earlier texts by Hegel, Hölderlin or Schelling is overlooked by Walter Kaufmann in his *Hegel-Reinterpretation*, New York, 1965; page 44-46. In general Hölderlin, Hegel and Schelling seem to be exceptions both to the apolitical Hellenism and to the cult of "Innerlichkeit" which prevailed elsewhere in the Germanies. Compare G. A. Kelly, *Politics, Idealism and History*, who also failed to do justice to the political consciousness which abounded in Swabian intellectual circles; esp. 79-88.

⁷⁵ Martin Hasselhorn, *Der Altwürttembergische Pfarrstand*, 24-39, 66-80.

⁷⁶ See F. L. Carsten, *Princes and Parliaments in Germany*, (Oxford, 1959), 142-148; Erwin Hölzle, *Das alte Recht und die Revolution*, 3-13, and A. E. Adam, "Herzog Karl und die Landschaft," in *Herzog Karl Eugen von Württemberg und seine Zeit*, Württembergischer Geschichts- und Altertums Verein (Esslingen, 1909), I, 193-310; henceforth cited as *Herzog Karl*.

⁷⁷ Hölzle, *op. cit.*, 3-8; Adam, *art. cit.*, 266-310.

barkeit, and from the pitifully small commercial and industrial middle class. Though certainly not affluent men, these clerics were respected leaders of their community and pillars of culture and intellectual life in the Duchy.⁷⁸

The traditional avenue of access to clerical office in Württemberg was the Theological Seminary in Tübingen. This Seminary, or *Stift*, was by far the most prestigious institution of learning in the Duchy. For centuries, the best qualified offspring of the most powerful families in Württemberg had competed for admission through examination. Closed to the artisan class, the peasantry and even to most of the officials, education at the *Stift* was the surest way to achieve prestige in a society in which the church monopolized cultural and intellectual power, and in which only the clergy enjoyed a university education. As a member of the clergy, it was traditionally possible to realize one's ambition not only as a pastor, but also in affairs or in letters. In philosophy, statistics and even industrial planning, the Württemberg clergy played a predominant role in their society. And, in fact, the leaders of the church, the Prelates, were simultaneously leaders of the church and of the Estates. The decision to study at the *Stift* was therefore by no means a reflection of religious ardour but the obvious course for the most gifted children of the *Honoratioren*.⁷⁹

Before the French Revolution, Württemberg had been encircled by powers in which despotism, more or less enlightened, prevailed. During the last quarter, and especially during the last decade, of the century, the Duchy sustained an almost unrelieved political crisis. The "dualism" between the Estates and the duke which had always characterized the political life of Württemberg was now complicated by internal ideological division and conflict within the middle classes, between those who accepted enlightened despotism as the only form of government in keeping with the times, and those who defended the "Old Law" of the Duchy against all comers. As leaders of the middle classes in Württemberg society, the clergy itself was divided into two camps. The older members of the ecclesiastical establishment believed that it was their political role to buttress and support the ventures of their own enlightened despot. Others, usually members of the younger generation, believed that it was their function to be in the vanguard of reform, either by defending the "Old Law" or by being proponents of radical and substantial change.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Hasselhorn, *op. cit.*, 24-56, *passim*.

⁷⁹ Hasselhorn, *op. cit.*, 40-46, 51, for the *Stift* see Martin Leube, *Geschichte des Tübinger Stifts*, III, (*Blätter für Württembergische Kirchengeschichte, Sonderheft V*), Stuttgart, 1936, p. 12-172.

⁸⁰ Hölzle, *op. cit.*, 67-87, and K. Wetter, *art. cit.* 402-404; cf. J. Droz, *L'Allemagne*

During the early eighteenth century the Swabian Pietists, an influential segment of the Württemberg clergy, had justified oppositional politics on the grounds of Christian belief. While, elsewhere in Germany, Pietism was a sectarian movement without specific political content, in Württemberg the "fathers" of Pietistic thought emphasized the historical mission of the Church in rejuvenating society. Men such as Valentine Andréâ, Oetinger and Bengel believed that true believers were reborn men who together constituted an "invisible church" fighting for the ascendance of the Kingdom of God, a goal which involved a radical revolution in social usages.⁸¹

While the emphasis in Swabian Pietism was on education toward a new consciousness based on freedom, the leading thinkers of the movement upheld the rights of the faithful to resist tyranny. Upholding the liberties of the *Ehrbarkeit* in their capacity as leaders of the Church and of the Estates, Oetinger and Bengel, in fact, fought for political reform in the conviction that by so doing, the Church was fulfilling its proper function of struggling for the realization of a good society.⁸² During the last quarter of the century, however, – when our three theological candidates were coming of age – Pietism had ceased to be the dominant form of Christian thought in the Duchy of Württemberg. The wane of Pietism was in part a consequence of the erosion of Christian thought during the eighteenth century, but it was primarily a reflection of some subtle changes in the political atmosphere prevalent in the Duchy.⁸³

Until the constitutional settlement of 1770, which guaranteed the rights of the Estates as against those of the Duke, the dualism between the Duke and the Estates had found its ideological expression in the confessional difference between the Catholic duke and his Lutheran subjects. As long as the Estates were on the defensive, Pietistic Christianity served as an ideology whereby the people of the Duchy could maintain their self-assurance and self-respect vis-a-vis the alien religion and manners of their ruler. After the victory of the Estates in 1770, which had as its consequence the decision by Karl Eugen to play the role of an "enlightened despot", the church ceased to fill this ideological function.⁸⁴ After 1770, when new enlightened forms of thinking radiating from the court and Duke Karl Eugen's new academy, the *Karlsschule*, challenged the older Christian

et la Révolution Française, 112-115, and F. W. Schelling, *Briefe und Dokumente*, H. Fuhrmans, ed., (Bonn, 1962), I, 11, 14, 18; henceforth cited as *Fuhrmans*.

⁸¹ Hasselhorn, *op. cit.*, 93-105.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 75-79, 93-112.

⁸³ Hölzle, *op. cit.*, 74-79, and R. Kraus, "Die schöne Literatur," *Herzog Karl*, I, 438-445.

⁸⁴ Hasselhorn, *op. cit.*, 66-72; Leube, *op. cit.*, 27-48.

ideas of Württemberg Pietism with the irresistible force of modernity, theological thought in the Duchy went into a period of retrenchment. While some theological leaders adopted the modish forms of thought prevalent at the court and among the bureaucracy, others retreated into a kind of Christian orthodoxy very akin to modern Fundamentalism.⁸⁵

With the eclipse of Pietism, the radicals in Württemberg society lost their orthodox champions. The Professors of Theology and Philosophy at the University of Tübingen, attempting to accommodate Christianity and the Enlightenment as understood within the context of the *Karlsschule* and the bureaucracy, were in fact accommodating Christianity and despotism. And the official leaders of the Church tried to save their traditional powers by becoming the staunchest defenders of enlightened despotism in the Duchy.⁸⁶

By 1790, when hostility between the Duke and the Estates broke out once more, the clergy as a whole had ceased to constitute the intellectual leadership of the radical elements of the *Honoratioren*. Hölderlin, Hegel, and Schelling, like many other members of their generation, torn between their theological vocation and their civic patriotism, searched for a new ideology of freedom which would replace Christianity as the dominant ideology in the Duchy. Repelled by the obsequiousness of their theological teachers vis-a-vis political authority, they struggled to create a new faith derived not from Christian obscurantism and humility, but from freedom and reason. And they tried to fill the lacuna left by the disappearance of Pietism by creating a new way of thinking which would bridge the gap between their own ideal of social justice and the degrading circumstances around them, based not on revealed truth but on the absolute autonomy of each individual.⁸⁷

The apologetic tone adopted by the teachers at Tübingen during the 80's and early 90's, Storr, Schnurrer and Flatt, reflected the atmosphere of compromise which prevailed in official circles in Württemberg subsequent to the constitutional settlement of 1770. Like their counterparts in the bureaucracy and in the Estates, these leaders of the church were, by and large, satisfied with existing conditions and anxious to protect their own position and status from attack by the less privileged. Responding to the spirit of the times, the professors at Tübingen either adopted a kind of

⁸⁵ Gustav Hauber, "Die Hohe Karlschule," *Herzog Karl*, II, 3-114; Leube, *op. cit.*, 12-15.

⁸⁶ Letter from Hegel to Schelling, January, 1795, Hegel, *Briefe*, I, 8; Letter from Schelling to Hegel, July 21, 1795, *ibid.*, 27.

⁸⁷ Letter from Hegel to Schelling, January, 1795, Hegel, *Briefe*, I, 18; cf. Martin Leube, "Die geistige Lage im Stift in den Tagen der französischen Revolution," *Blätter für Württembergische Kirchengeschichte*, (Stuttgart, 1935) N. F. XXXIX, 163.

theological positivism in which the facts of Christian Revelation were "approved by the credibility of its witnesses", or stressed that the most sophisticated kinds of enlightened thinking, such as that contained in the major writings of Kant, left room for the faith of orthodox Christian believers.⁸⁸

Though later generations looked back on the last years of the reign of Duke Karl Eugen as the "good old days", contemporaries were well aware that things were not going well in the Duchy. Though Württemberg was unique among the German territories in lacking an indigenous aristocracy, it was by no means the most modern state in terms of its social development. While in many of the German states the middle classes were in a state of transition from being primarily a class of officials to being a capitalist class, the 18th century witnessed in Württemberg a decline of all urban pursuits and a revival of agrarian ventures. In spite of the attempts of the duke and the bureaucracy to encourage industrial innovation, the economic and social trend during the century was towards the abandonment of urban pursuits for rural recolonization. During the long years of peace in the eighteenth century, it was once again possible for the people of Württemberg to exploit their agricultural resources without the fear of war. Throughout the century, the relative importance of town as against the countryside declined. In the context of a massive move towards rural recolonization, all the attempts of the Duke and the bureaucracy to assist nascent industry were doomed from the outset. The Enlightenment, as promulgated by the court, taught at the Karlsschule and accepted by many members of the bureaucracy, stood in marked opposition to this dominant social fact of a revitalized agrarian economy.⁸⁹

In most of Germany, the Enlightenment was an attempt on the part of middle class thinkers to find an ideology for their own class.⁹⁰ In Württemberg the enlightenment, in spite of its stress on commerce, industry and free trade, was an importation from outside, without indigenous roots.⁹¹ And though the new enlightened forms of thinking were strong enough to force the professors of theology and philosophy at the University of Tübingen to reappraise their thinking and try to accommodate orthodox Christianity and the new scientific, rationalistic world view, the Enlighten-

⁸⁸ For Schnurrer, Flatt, Storr see Walter Betzendörfer, *Hölderlins Studienjahre im Tübinger Stift* (Heilbronn, 1922), 14-56; for Bök see E. Müller, *Hölderlin-Studien*, 88. Cf. Hasselhorn, *op. cit.*, 34-35.

⁸⁹ See Arthur Schott, "Wirtschaftliches Leben," *Herzog Karl*, I, 313-360.

⁹⁰ Cf. Hans Matthias Wolff, *Die Weltanschauung der deutschen Aufklärung in geschichtlicher Entwicklung*, Bern. 1949.

⁹¹ Hölzle, *op. cit.*, 55-58.

ment, as the ideology of the establishment, was not strong enough to weather the crisis of Württemberg society and the theological class.⁹²

By the last decade of the eighteenth century, the dualism between the Duke and the Estates which characterized political life in Württemberg had resulted in a political and social stalemate. Neither the leaders of the Estates, obsessed by maintaining their own prerogatives, nor the leaders of the bureaucracy were able to come to grips with the problems raised by a rapid growth of the population within a basically agrarian society. The Estates, committed to preserving their liberties, were unable to transcend the self-interest of their extremely small constituency; the Duke was hampered in effecting bureaucratic reforms by the intransigence of the Estates. And the Church, on the defensive against the groundswell of secularism manifested by the Court and by the bureaucracy, was unable to find positions for many of the qualified theological candidates or to create new parishes to care for the rapidly increasing population. Though the numbers of the privileged grew, the numbers of the offices available in the church and bureaucracy remained the same. The *Honoratioren* responded to this dearth of meaningful employment by closing its rank to new men without however insuring positions for their own offspring.⁹³

By the last decade of the eighteenth century, new theological graduates found their path to a secure position blocked by a phalanx of the older generation. Due to their own superabundance of numbers, a parish could be attained only after a length delay if at all. Dissatisfied from the outset with a society which had imparted to them a sense of status without giving them an opportunity for meaningful action, the younger generation at the *Karlsschule* and at the University of Tübingen were inclined from the beginning to oppose the existing establishment.⁹⁴

For students studying theology in Tübingen, a secure position as parish priest seemed very remote. Consequently they were more inclined to see their education as a chance to cultivate their minds than as training for a prestigious vocation. As is evident from the biographies of many candidates, the temptation was strong to bypass the usual route for advancement within the church and achieve status as men of letters or as men of

⁹² Leube, "Die geistige Lage," *loc. cit.*, 150-151; Hölzle, *op. cit.*, 84; an important symptom of this process was the closing of the *Karlsschule*, Gustav Hauber, *art. cit.*, 108-112.

⁹³ Hasselhorn, *op. cit.*, 34-35, 84-85.

⁹⁴ See Martin Leube, "Die geistige Lage," *loc. cit.*, 149-158; Rudolf Krauss, *art. cit.*, 438-461; Adolf Wohlwill, *Weltbürgertum und Vaterlandsliebe der Schwaben* (Hamburg, 1875), 24-28.

⁹⁵ Reinhard was the most famous politician and diplomat to graduate from the *Stift*; see Wilhelm Lang, *Graf Reinhard, ein deutsch-französisches Lebensbild*, Bamberg, 1896. For secularism in the *Stift* see Leube, "Die geistige Lage," *loc. cit.*, 134-151.

affairs. For such students, the ecclesiastical restrictions, the rules of decorum and the regimentation of life at the Tübingen *Stift*, must have seemed a useless and undignified intrusion on their freedom.⁹⁵ Conceiving of themselves not as clergymen *in statu nascendi*, but as intellectuals, they found the anti-intellectualism of their teachers repugnant to their own sense of intellectual honesty. Unsure of finding a position within a society increasingly torn by social division, Hölderlin, Hegel and Schelling and their classmates were predisposed to hostility toward the prevailing modes of thought. They rejected both the teachings of their professors, which they felt were not achieving a spiritual reunification of their people, and the ideology current among the bureaucracy, which left no room for the spontaneous initiative of the citizenry.

By 1789, the students at the *Stift* in Tübingen, unsure of their own social position and conscious of the failure of the bureaucracy and the church to unite the people and to heal the divisive wounds inflicted by social change, were a highly unstable body. Bred to consider themselves leaders of the community, they encountered a society without direction and an older generation more concerned with preserving its privileges than with resolving the intellectual and political problems which threatened the Duchy.⁹⁶

In this context, the French Revolution, which threatened the political order in all of Europe, could not but be a cathartic and liberating experience for the angry young men studying at Tübingen. Inspired by the French Revolution, many of the students at the two centers of higher learning in the Duchy, the Karlsschule and the Tübingen *Stift*, became opponents of the existing establishment, which they felt had been undermined by this, "milestone in human history". Though hardly revolutionaries plotting the overthrow of the Duke, or even participants in the struggles of the Estates, the students at Tübingen felt that the old manner of religious argument, committed in fact to the support of despotism, had been undermined by these momentous historical happenings. Some students belonged to revolutionary societies, read the French papers, sang revolutionary songs, planted freedom trees and even corresponded with the Jacobin club in Strasbourg. Others limited their radical activity to

⁹⁵ Leube, "Die Geistige Lage," *loc. cit.*, 134, 151. By the winter of 1789, Duke Carl-Eugene was very disturbed by the undisciplined atmosphere which prevailed at the *Stift*. The French students attending the seminary appear to have been particularly unruly. The Duke visited the *Stift* in person in November but apparently to no avail. Subsequently he ordered that he be sent reports on the behavior of the seminarians and authorized a revision of the statutes. From 1790 on the Duke was constantly involved in the affairs of the *Stift*. G.S.A. VII, 404-417.

refusing to accept tradition as the source and ground of Christian teaching.⁹⁷

The leaders of the church and the teachers at the *Stift* responded to the danger of student unrest by stressing that part of the curriculum which was concerned with Dogmatics and by reemphasizing the importance of religious habits and religious decorum; from the beginning of the nineties, the professors and staff of the *Stift* were even instructed by the Consistory of the Church to keep a close watch on the actions of the students and to report all "unbecoming behavior".⁹⁸ As could have been anticipated, the students at the *Stift* resented this encroachment on their freedom and, associating the college rules increasingly with the general phenomenon of "despotism", became increasingly more radical throughout the decade.⁹⁹

The radicalization of opinion of the entire student body at the *Stift* was a slow process which reached its apex only during the second half of the nineties, but Hölderlin, Hegel and Schelling stood out among their fellow classmates for their radical opinions from the very beginning. As early as 1791, Duke Karl Eugen accused Schelling in an open hearing of being the translator of the Marseillaise.¹⁰⁰ By 1794, the authorities suspected that Schelling was indeed the ringleader of the radicals at Tübingen.¹⁰¹ But Schelling did not limit his radical activities to such clandestine ventures; all of his early philosophical writings affirmed his commitment to the new order in politics. Schelling even intended his "Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism", published in 1796,¹⁰² to be a philosophy for a "League of Free Spirits"¹⁰³ in Stuttgart, which was to be a counterpart to an association already formed by the most radical students of Fichte in Jena.¹⁰⁴

Hölderlin, under the influence of the radical Swabian poet Schubart and the radical jurist Staudlin, was also very much a part of the clandestine radical activities at the *Stift*. Not only does all of his poetry after 1791

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 164, 167-168, Betzendörfer, *op. cit.*, 112-113; Wohlwill, *op. cit.*, 24-25; for the Karlschule see Gustav Hauber, *art. cit.* 109.

⁹⁸ This closer supervision began in 1786; see Leube, "Die Geistige Lage," *loc. cit.*, 156; Julius Kläiber, *Hölderlin, Hegel und Schelling*, 206.

⁹⁹ This student unrest is summarized well in the expression "sie werden durch ihre Protestationen den Ding schon eine andere Gestalt geben," in a letter from Ernst Gottlieb Bengel to Neuffer, February 29, 1792, G.S.A., VI₂, 599; see also letter from Hölderlin to his sister, February, 1792, G.S.A.₁, 74-75. Cf. Leube, "Die geistige Lage," *loc. cit.*, 157-171.

¹⁰⁰ Betzendörfer, *op. cit.*, 113; Fuhrmans, 18.

¹⁰¹ Leube, "Die geistige Lage," *loc. cit.*, 166.

¹⁰² *Schellings Werke*, I, 207-265.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 265; it is certain that by 1798 such an organization did in fact exist; see Droz, *op. cit.*, 129.

¹⁰⁴ See W. Flitner, *A. L. Hülsen und der Bund der freien Männer*, Jena, 1913.

suggest a strong partisanship for the revolutionary cause in France, but the manner in which his poetry was cited by his classmates confirms the suspicion that Hölderlin was attempting to create a literature for this radical group at the *Stift*.¹⁰⁵ And though there is only scanty evidence that Hegel himself was involved in clandestine radical work, it cannot be doubted that Hegel was also a partisan of the French revolutionaries and that his chief concern during his student years was to find a new ideology to serve as the spiritual basis for a free society.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, the correspondence between Schelling and Hegel, which begins, unfortunately, only after Hegel left Tübingen, confirms – what is generally agreed upon in the memoirs of his fellow students – that Hegel, like Hölderlin and Schelling, was not only a partisan of the French Revolution but also a vigorous opponent of the despotism which prevailed in the Duchy.¹⁰⁷

Though involved with secret societies partisan to the French cause, Schelling, Hölderlin and Hegel conceived of themselves not as professional revolutionaries but as ideological leaders. Our young Swabians believed that the setting for their ideological revolution would be provided not by domestic violence, but by the victories of the French Army.¹⁰⁸ But it was not only political realism which suggested to Hölderlin, Hegel and Schellings that violent revolution was out of the question in their own society. As self-assured members of their elevated class, they had nothing but contempt for the vulgar crowd beneath them. Totally divorced socially from the artisans and peasants, they failed to see how such men, enslaved by Christianity to their own narrow interests, could be the instruments of liberty.¹⁰⁹

Distinguishing themselves sharply, not only from the lower classes, but from the majority of their own peers, the young Swabians believed that they and their like constituted a hidden “community of spirits”¹¹⁰ held together by common faith in the effective power of freedom and reason.

¹⁰⁵ Adolf Beck, “Aus der Umwelt des jungen Hölderlins, Stamm und Tagebucheinträge, mitgeteilt und erläutert,” *Hölderlin Jahrbuch*, F. Beissner and P. Kluckhohn, ed., (Tübingen, 1947), 41-44.

¹⁰⁶ Dieter Henrich, “Leutwein über Hegel. Ein Dokument zu Hegels Biographie,” *Hegel-Studien*, F. Nicolini and O. Pöggeler, (Bonn, 1965), III, 39-78.

¹⁰⁷ Letter from Hegel to Schelling, December, 1794, Hegel, *Briefe*, I, 11-13.

¹⁰⁸ This is especially true of Hölderlin; see letter to his sister, June, 1792, G.S.A., VI₁, 77. But the same thought is expressed on occasion by Schelling, see letter to his father, May 28, 1796, Gustav Leopold Plitt, *Aus Schellings Leben, In Briefen*, (Leipzig, 1869), I, 119-120.

¹⁰⁹ See letter from Hölderlin to Staudlin and Neuffer, December 30, 1793, G.S.A., VI₁, 101; and *Schellings Werke*, I, 203-204.

¹¹⁰ The phrase, “community of spirits,” was coined by Sinclair in a letter to Jung, cited in Beck, *art. cit.*, 44. See letter from Hegel to Schelling, July 10, 1794, Hegel, *Briefe*, I, 9-10; cf. E. Staiger, *Der Geist der Liebe, passim*.

To describe this spiritual community, Schelling, Hölderlin and Hegel used two Christian symbols, "the invisible church",¹¹¹ and the "Kingdom of God",¹¹² which bridged the gap between the two traditions which were most influential on their thinking: Kantian idealism and Swabian Pietism.

For Kant, both the "invisible church" and the "Kingdom of God" were rational constructs within his scheme for a "Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone".¹¹³ Moral men within the temporal church constituted an "invisible church" aiming at the realization of the "Kingdom of God on earth". It was the existence of this invisible church which gave meaning to the visible or institutional church, which formed, so to speak, a shell about it. Still, Kant did not believe that either the invisible church or the kingdom of God were real, historical entities operative in human time.

For the Swabian Pietists, on the other hand, both the "invisible church" and the "Kingdom of God", while unrelated to either reason or freedom, were concrete historical entities which would be realized in real historical time. The regenerate within the church constituted an army, fighting within the ranks of the invisible church for the good. The invisible church was in fact an active regenerating force within the visible church. It was invisible only in the sense that the unregenerate multitude could not find visible signs that such and such men were in fact reborn Christians. The kingdom of God was consequently the real goal of human work in the world. Through the work of the elect, a new republic of reborn Christian men would live together in justice, harmony, freedom and peace.¹¹⁴

By adopting the "invisible church" and the "Kingdom of God," as the symbols uniting their ventures, Schelling, Hölderlin and Hegel expressed their fundamental belief that reason and freedom not only were ideals divorced from the visible world, but might through their common work become operative in, and constitutive of the real, historical world. Sharing an intense belief in the power of philosophical truth to effect substantial and immediate change in the cultural, spiritual and political environment about them, Schelling, Hölderlin and Hegel felt that any important change would not be the consequence of some piecemeal reform, or of some violent act, but only of a profound revolution in consciousness.

Schelling, the most academic of the Swabians, agreed with Fichte that

¹¹¹ Letter from Hegel to Schelling, July 10, 1794, Hegel, *Briefe*, I, 9-10; and letter from Hölderlin to J. G. Ebel, November 9, 1795, G.S.A., VI, 184-185.

¹¹² See *ante* note 111; cf. Adrien T. B. Peperzak, *Le Jeune Hegel et la vision morale du monde* (The Hague, 1960), 9-11.

¹¹³ "Religion innerhalb der Grenzen des blossen Vernunft," Kant, *Werke*, IV, 649-879, *passim*, see especially *ibid.*, 751, 803.

¹¹⁴ Hasselhorn, *op. cit.*, 93-112.

the philosophical revolution begun by Kant and continued by Fichte and himself was historically more potent than the purely institutional changes effected by the French Revolution. If men would only become aware of themselves as the true causes of things in the world, they would be able to mold the institutions about them in accord with their freedom.¹¹⁵ Hölderlin in his novel *Hyperion*, tried to think through a scheme of education which would enable men to live together virtuously in freedom, and Hegel, more moderate and "realistic" than Schelling or Hölderlin, felt that Kant and Rousseau already had taught all the ideas that would be necessary to destroy the aura around princes and impress individuals with a sense of their own rights.¹¹⁶ Through a critique of conventional religion, Hegel hoped to expose the nexus between orthodox Christianity and despotism. By creating a new civic religion in accord with reason, he hoped to expand the consciousness of the people and to turn their interest away from their own selfish selves to the larger civic concerns of a free people.¹¹⁷

In spite of the confidence of our three theological candidates that they were fighting in different ways for the same cause, the "Kingdom of God," "the invisible church," "Reason," and "Freedom," the vagueness of these slogans concealed deep-set differences, not only in their goals, but also in their practical politics. Schelling, better born than Hegel or Hölderlin, instinctively sided with the radical elements in the estates, and hoped that the estates might be able to liberate Swabian society.¹¹⁸ At first, like Georg Koerner and Karl Reinhard, native Swabians acting as French agents, he hoped that French military action might be a catalyst for reform in Württemberg.¹¹⁹ Certainly, it was no accident that Schelling planned to join Reinhard and Koerner in Hamburg, and to use Reinhard's good offices to enable him to travel freely in France.¹²⁰ Like Georgi and other members of the estates, however, he thought that the existing constitution of Württemberg was capable of evolving peaceably towards freedom and even hoped that Württemberg might be able to regenerate itself without French assistance through the power of the estates alone.¹²¹

Unlike Schelling, Hölderlin did not believe that Württemberg society could evolve organically towards freedom. Committed, like his mentor,

¹¹⁵ *Schellings Werke*, I, 115, Note 2.

¹¹⁶ Letter from Hegel to Schelling, April 16, 1795, Hegel, *Briefe*, I, 24.

¹¹⁷ Letter from Hegel to Schelling, January, 1795, *ibid.*, 15, 16.

¹¹⁸ Plitt, *op. cit.*, 190.

¹¹⁹ Plitt, *op. cit.*, 119.

¹²⁰ Letter from Schelling to Georg Kerner, February 13, 1796, *Fuhrmans*, I, 62-64.

¹²¹ Plitt, *op. cit.*, 222; in fact by 1797, Schelling's attitude like Hegel's was ambivalent. On one hand, in theory he supported the French revolutionary cause; on the other, he was appalled both by the callous attitude of the French towards their enemies and by the poor defense which Württemberg troops made against the French.

Staudlin, to the politics of the Girondist faction in France, he believed even after the rise of Robespierre, that the rejuvenation of German society must be achieved by the establishment of a German republic by German leaders assisted by the French Government. Admiring both the theory and the practice of such Girondist leaders as Brissot and Vergniand, he believed that French armies should liberate Europe by the sword.¹²²

Hegel, far more politically conscious than Schelling or Hölderlin and like his friends a staunch partisan of the French Revolution, realized that meaningful reforms could not be imposed from without, but must be the result of significant change within the Duchy itself. Still inclined as the son of a ducal official to suspect the motives of the leaders of the Estates, he felt that a rejuvenation of his society would be possible only if the minds of the citizens were freed from the oppressive shackles of conventional Christian teaching. Hegel believed that political and moral servitude were two facets of the fundamental condition of unfreedom which characterized the life of modern man. If men were to achieve true freedom, the conspiracy between despotism and conventional Christianity must be exposed.¹²³ Believing that the French Revolution and Kant's philosophy had inaugurated an age of human emancipation, Hegel felt that the best way to achieve liberty for his own society would be to destroy the hold of the traditional clergy over the minds of the citizens by ending the oligarchy of the Estates and allowing the enlightened despot the power to exercise all the power which lawfully and rightfully belonged to the state.¹²⁴

Unlike Kant, however, whose liberal theory of the state served as an inspiration for Hegel's early thought, Hegel from the outset, inspired by Rousseau, believed that a prime characteristic of a viable society was its ability to defend itself and involve its citizens in collective ventures. This revitalization of political life would be possible only if each individual man could expand and develop his faculties while simultaneously expanding the breadth of his vision. The role of the intellectuals consequently was not to combine into an elite group and discover esoteric truths incapable of being understood by the masses, but to attack with the help of the new ideas the existing structure of politics and ideas and convince them of their worth which would lead to reforms which would result in an age of human emancipation.¹²⁵

¹²² Letter from Hölderlin to his sister, June, 1792, G.S.A., VI₁, 77; see also his letter to his mother, November, 1792, *ibid.*, 82. For biographical information on Staudlin see Adolf Wohlwill, *Weltbürgertum*, 29, 33-35, 85-88.

¹²³ Letter from Hegel to Schelling, January, 1795, Hegel, *Briefe*, I, 16-17.

¹²⁴ Rudolf Haym, *Hegel und seine Zeit*, (Berlin, 1857), 66.

¹²⁵ Letter from Hegel to Schelling, April 16, 1795, Hegel, *Briefe*, I, 24. It was only

In the middle of the nineties, Schelling, Hölderlin and Hegel were by no means aware of the differences among their views. On the contrary, they believed that each in his own way was contributing to the same project of enlightening his fellow citizens and freeing them from their mental chains. Schelling, by far the most precocious of the three, was already engaged in an exposé of conventional theology and metaphysics.¹²⁶ Hegel was examining the corrupt and servile historical roots of conventional Christian religion,¹²⁷ and Hölderlin, while writing his novel *Hyperion*, was hoping to develop a new scheme of education for the vanguard of political emancipation.¹²⁸ Indeed, at this time, there was nothing they had said which prevented our three men from thinking that each in his own proper sphere was contributing to the same task and that they and others similarly engaged were part of a "community of spirits" working for human emancipation.¹²⁹ It was only in thinking through the presuppositions of each separate venture that our three friends became aware of the different assumptions which guided their views. As the years went by, what originally had been conceived of as division of labor became a struggle for the intellectual primacy of metaphysics, poetry or history. Since each of our three thinkers insisted that his own thought was the consequence of a new total vision, this competition involved a fruitful interchange of ideas among them. But the story of this intellectual friendship, which left none of the friends unscarred, no longer belongs to this introduction but is part of the story which we have yet to tell.

in 1800 that Hegel realized that this would entail the development of a new philosophy, logic and metaphysics.

¹²⁶ See *post* Chapter II.

¹²⁷ See *post* Chapter IV.

¹²⁸ See *post* Chapter III.

¹²⁹ This sense of belonging to an elite with common objectives and distinct tasks is well expressed in a letter from Schelling to Hegel, January, 1796, Hegel, *Briefe*, I, 35-36. The "tragic" quality of this youthful fraternalism is the subject of E. Staiger, *Der Geist der Liebe und das Schicksal*.

CHAPTER II

SCHELLING (1792-1796)

Friedrich Wilhelm Josef Schelling, born in 1775, was five years younger than Hölderlin or Hegel. Before graduating at twenty as *primus*, the head of his class, Schelling had already published three works, each of which was a substantial contribution to the scholarly or philosophical debates current in Germany during the nineties. Well born, well bred, self-confident, well adjusted and superbly educated, he was, at least superficially, as suited to be a champion of the orthodoxy current in Tübingen as to be its most illustrious foe. Born to the cloth, he was a superior exemplar of a superior class.¹

Schelling's parents, related to leading families in the estates and in the bureaucracy, belonged to one of those eminently respectable middle-class families which traditionally educated their intelligent offspring for the Church. Schelling's father, Friedrich Josef, whom Friedrich Wilhelm Josef treated with exemplary filial piety, was an eminent scholar of Semitic languages, a cleric who in his old age achieved the lofty position of Prelate of the Lutheran Church.² Even in his most arrogant youthful years, Schelling remained on very intimate terms with his father and helped him in all his scholarly ventures.³ Schelling's teachers idolized their prodigy, who excelled in Hebrew and Greek philology, and expected that he would become a future leader of the Church.⁴ Why did this child of for-

¹ Schelling's youth is related in F. W. J. Schelling, *Aus Schellings Leben in Briefen*, Gustav Leopold Plitt, ed., 2 vol. (Leipzig, 1869), I, 1-70; henceforth cited as *Plitt*, I. For the social background and status of the Swabian clergy see the superb study by Martin Hasselhorn, *Der Altwürttembergische Pfarrstand im 18. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart, 1958.

² For Schelling's family background see account by his son in *Plitt*, I, 1-5; cf. Julius Klaiber, *Hölderlin, Hegel und Schelling in ihren schwäbischen Jugendjahren* (Stuttgart, 1877) 107-110.

³ *Plitt*, I, 214.

⁴ So his Greek teacher, Reuchlin, at the preparatory school at Bebenhausen; *Plitt*, I, 26. According to the official university records on the "Primus of his class," Schelling invariably was awarded the highest grade of *Ing. felix* or *ingenium excellens* while Hölderlin and Hegel usually received only the grade of *ingenium bonum*; F. W. J.

tune, who by his status and his prodigious achievements was spared most of the unpleasantness of a theological education, come to rebel against an establishment in which he would have become a natural leader?⁵

Schelling's father was outstanding not only for the eminence of his scholarship, but also for his servile attitude towards established authority. Originally a student of the Pietist, Albrecht Bengel, he responded to the "spirit of the times" by jettisoning the eschatological elements in the Pietist tradition and withdrawing into the world of pure scholarship. Though it would have been inconceivable within the patriarchal context of eighteenth century Germany for Schelling to have consciously rebelled against his father, it is nonetheless plausible that the rebelliousness which characterized Schelling's early development was motivated at least in part by his distaste for the timidity of his father.⁶

At the end of the 18th century, the professors at Tübingen were defending an establishment challenged not only concretely, by the dangers of invasion from France or Austria, but ideologically, by the ideas of the French Revolution and the seemingly seditious teachings of Kant. By and large, the teachers at the *Stift* were able to face this challenge, and channel the discontent of the students into more or less harmless directions. Many of Schelling's classmates at the *Stift* did share both his appreciation of Kant and his sympathy for the French Revolution. But they hoped that Kantianism and traditional Christianity could somehow be reconciled. Following such eminent professors as Bök and Storr,⁷ they believed that Kantianism, far from disproving the facts of Christian revelation, had actually overthrown the rationalism of the exponents of natural religion, and had left room once again for orthodox Christian belief.⁸

Schelling's early writings show him gradually breaking with the basic

Schelling, Briefe und Dokumente, ed., Horst Fuhrmans, Bonn, 1962 Vol. I. Henceforth cited as *Fuhrmans*, I, 47.

⁵ Unlike most theology students, Schelling spent most of his boyhood and early adolescence either at home or with relatives. Schelling, a small boy, was taught in classrooms where most of the other boys were between four and six years his seniors. Perhaps Klaiber is correct in thinking that Schelling acquired his cockiness and intellectual arrogance by contrasting his own achievements with that of the older students; Klaiber, *op. cit.*, 135-144. Cf. *Plitt*, I, 5-25.

⁶ For an example of Schelling's rebellious attitude see *Schellings Werke*, 6 vol., M. Schröter ed., I, 72; cited as Schelling.

⁷ For Bök see Ernst Müller, *Hölderlin, Studien zur Geschichte seines Geistes*, (Stuttgart, 1944), 88; for Storr, see *Plitt*, I, 5.

⁸ See Martin Leube, "Die geistige Lage im Stift den Tagen der Französische Revolution," *Blätter für Württembergische Kirchengeschichte*, N. F. XXXIX, 1935, p. 149-171., *Fuhrmans*, I, 9-40 and Walter Betzendörfer, *Hölderlins Studienjahre im Tübinger Stift* (Heilbronn, 1922) 9-63. In the report by the tutors to the Consistory (discussed in Note 9), Schelling is in fact confused with other "Kantian" students who used scripture to communicate Kantian philosophy; this practice was – as we shall see – not condoned by Schelling; Martin Leube, *loc. cit.*, 163, 166.

assumptions of the teachers at Tübingen. At first it seemed as if he would try to revolutionize Tübingen from within, while remaining an integrated and highly successful member of his academic community. Indeed, while writing his first German publication, "On the Oldest Myths" – published at the age of 18 in his third year at the Stift – Schelling still believed that his critical approach to the prevailing modes of thought could be reconciled with a theological subject of inquiry and with his theological vocation, and was willing to use traditional methods of biblical exegesis and the prevailing philosophical assumptions for his own ends.⁹

At first sight, "On the Oldest Myths" ¹⁰ appears to be a painfully banal and superficial essay unrelated to Schelling's early philosophical writings. Schelling, like Semmler, Reimarus and Lessing before him, employed the framework of a study of mythology, to ridicule the moral and rational value of many of the most famous stories of the Bible. Schelling, like his predecessors, was attacking through his critical interpretation of Biblical texts, those orthodox Christians who, like his teacher, Gottlieb Storr, in Tübingen, stressed the literal truth of Scripture.¹¹ But by insisting that

⁹ Indeed, all of Schelling's early writings (from 1792 to 1796) presupposed that he would be able to revolutionize the basic assumptions of his fellow citizens while remaining a respected member of the Württemberg establishment. A letter by Johann Friedrich Flatt to Süßkind, written in the summer of 1797, indicates that this rather insecure professor of theology felt that Schelling had competed with him for dominance over the minds of the students; see Martin Leube, *loc. cit.*, 166 and *Fuhrmans*, I, 38. This is confirmed by the report of the tutors (*Preceptoren*) to the consistory in Stuttgart, in which Schelling is portrayed as a leader of the Kantian school. Still the same report reveals that Schelling was willing to preach in the largest church in Tübingen; Leube, *loc. cit.*, 166. Schelling becomes eager to leave Tübingen and theology behind him only during the reign of Duke Louis Eugene. His decision is at first motivated more by disgust with the prevailing obscurantism of this reign than by the desire for another vocation. See his letter to Hegel of February 4, 1795 in Hegel, *Briefe*, I, 20-22. In was in fact only after he left the *Stift*, that this basic assumption is questioned. In January, 1796, he writes to Hegel that he wants to leave this land of "scribes and priests" for Hamburg, a revolutionary center where his fellow countryman Reinhard was residing as French Consul; Hegel, *Briefe*, I, 34-36. Cf. Wilhelm Lang, *Graf Reinhard, Bamberg, 1896*. And it is only in his correspondence with his father concerning his possible employment as a professor in Tübingen rather than in Jena that his distaste with the prospect of teaching in Tübingen becomes apparent; *Plitt*, I, 205-239.

¹⁰ "Über Mythen, Historische Sagen und Philosopheme der ältesten Welt," probably written at the end of 1792 (cf. *Plitt*, I, 37) and printed in Schelling, I, 3-43. This work is based in part on his M.A. thesis of September 1792, "Antiquissimi de prima malorum, humanorum . . ." (printed in Schelling, E. B. I, 3-74). Hinrich Knittermeyer in his brilliant study *Schelling und die Romantische Schule* (Munich, 1929), 40-45, dismisses this radical critique of mythical thinking as simply a residue of Schelling's "enlightened" education. By avoiding Schelling's central concerns, Knittermeyer fails to see the continuity between Schelling's early scholarship and his subsequent philosophizing. Both ventures, however, attempt to rid the mind of vestiges of sensual experience and are characterized by the same deep hostility to conventional thinking. See also *Plitt*, I, 37-38 and *Fuhrmans*, I, 41.

¹¹ It seems that Storr based his belief in the literal truth of scripture on the "credibility" of the evangelists and of the apostles; *Plitt*, I, 51.

these Biblical texts were primitive in nature, he was also implicitly attacking those orthodox Christians who, like Flatt, tried to defend the truth of Scripture by giving the Bible a philosophical underpinning and those devotees of the vulgar enlightenment who believed that Scriptural stories were in fact allegorical forms of philosophical truths.¹² Still, at least on the surface, Schelling was concerned in "On the Oldest Myth" with showing how oral transmission, pride and the self-interest of priests and princes had perverted the truthful core of many myths.

The reader is appalled by the repetitiveness of the argument and bored by Schelling's perfunctory outrage. For Schelling was not really disturbed either by the superstitious and untruthful element in myth or by the erroneous truths transmitted by them. In fact, he was not even really interested in the myths themselves or in their impact on the mind of a primitive believer. The real object of his patronizing and supercilious pity was not the recipient of myth, but the primitive mythmaker himself.¹³

Unable to abstract, the ancient mythmaker attempted to verbalize his vision of reality by describing the world rather than by explaining it through concepts. The Greek and Hebrew mythmakers tried to explain such universal problems as the role of man in the world, the relation of things and men to their cause and the reason for human misery. But lacking concepts, they were compelled to see man as a thing-among-things in a world without meaning or structure. So inadvertently, the mythmaker explained that which was evident by referring to remote "objective causes" which he was quite unable to comprehend.¹⁴ Without the ability to use concepts, the ancient mythmaker was unable to distinguish between appearance and reality. Even when he used an image such as that of the "breath of life," he meant it literally and most certainly he thought of the soul as a "thing."¹⁵ And man, in the world of myth, thinking of himself as a thing-among-things, understood himself to be not a free agent, but a determined being.

¹² See the tutors' report to the Consistory in which the *preceptores* express their distaste for what they consider to be a facile attempt to use Kantian techniques to avoid serious biblical and dogmatic studies (Leube, *loc. cit.*, 163). The only extant examples of this trend are Hölderlin's and Hegel's sermons (in *G. S. A.*, IV, and in Johannes Hoffmeister, *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*, Stuttgart, 1936). While none of Schelling's students sermons has survived, his distaste for this form of apologetics is clear from his "Entwurf der Vorrede zu den histor. -kritischen Abhandlungen," (*Plitt*, I, 39-46).

¹³ The first half of this essay is a protracted natural history of superstition where, for example, many superstitions are explained by the "poor hearing" of illiterates who had no other way to transmit their history from generation to generation than by word of mouth. (Schelling, I, 8-9.)

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 33, 36.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 38.

Schelling – we see – was not at all charmed by “natural man” who was totally at the mercy of alien forces which he could not comprehend.¹⁶ Yet by emphasizing not so much the unscientific quality of myth as the unfree consciousness which created it, Schelling was introducing a new perspective for the study of the origins of superstition, unknown to earlier eighteenth century scholars. The chief import of Schelling’s new discovery was, however, less its heuristic potential as a device to comprehend remote cultures than the contrast which it implied between the unfree consciousness of primitive man and the spiritual grandeur which the moderns were capable of attaining. Sharply contrasting his own freedom with the abject determinism of the primitive mythmaker, Schelling claimed that man was in the first instance a spirit, and not a being existing in time and space. The key to the knowledge of man did not lie in nature; rather, the key to nature, its “Urbild,” lay in the understanding of man. And the vocation of man was not to be a child of nature, but its lawgiver.

Schelling of course did not blame the primitive mythmaker for attempting to comprehend an alien and hostile world with the means at his disposal. He certainly believed, however, that the development of the human mind and its ability to conceptualize now confronted modern man with the challenge of structuring the external world according to laws established by his own reason.¹⁷ Carried to its logical conclusion, this early vision of human freedom had not only purely scientific, but political, social and technological ramifications as well. In “On The Oldest Myth” Schelling suggested that modern man through reason did have the potential to win sovereignty over the world of appearance, while ancient man had not. This conclusion became the premise of his first philosophical writings, where, working out the philosophical implications of his own vision of human freedom, Schelling now contested the determinist assumptions no longer of primitive, but of conventional modern thought.¹⁸

By 1794, his fourth year at the Stift, Schelling, acclaimed by his teachers and his fellow students for his scholarly acumen, abandoned his exegetical ventures – which he considered to be of purely antiquarian interest – and

¹⁶ Consider, for example, the pejorative “kindisch” (*Ibid.*, I, 38) and “träge Vernunft” (*Ibid.*, I, 36) as contrasted with the higher state of man when he awakes to “höherer Tätigkeit” (I, 34).

¹⁷ Schelling, I, 34.

¹⁸ Schelling’s aim in all of his biblical criticism is to “fight off the philosophers in sheep’s clothing.” These would attempt otherwise either to harmonize philosophy and scripture by interpreting scriptural tales as allegorical forms of philosophical truth or to justify the literal truth of revelation by stressing the fallibility of human reasoning. (*Plitt*, I, 40.) Until these “wolves” are exposed, the intellectual autonomy of modern man is only potential, not real. The aim of Schelling’s early philosophical writing is precisely to expose the dogmatists.

threw himself headlong into the new philosophy inaugurated by Kant and developed by Fichte. Perhaps influenced by his teacher Johann Friedrich Flatt, a newly installed professor of theology at the *Stift*, Schelling from the outset rejected the moderate Kantianism prevalent at Tübingen. Schelling further maintained with Flatt that any attempt to save the tenets of rational theology, challenged by Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, by the "Postulates of Practical Reason," posited in Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*, was insulting both to religion and to the dignity of thought. For reason could not endure a contradiction between knowledge and the will to believe.¹⁹ But instead of following Flatt and returning to orthodoxy, Schelling preferred the intellectual integrity of Fichte's radical Kantianism to the uncertainties of Christian orthodoxy.

But it was not only the uncompromising intellectual honesty of Fichte – so different from the eclecticism which characterized the thinking of his teachers at the *Stift* – which captured young Schelling's fancy. As sober a thinker as Kant had repeatedly asserted that philosophers were now finally capable of solving the age-old problems of philosophy and creating a new metaphysics which would not be subject to future revision.²⁰ Schelling, enthralled by the speculative verve of Fichte's thought, believed that Fichte was in fact achieving this sublime goal and that he himself could contribute to the rapid acceptance of the new philosophy which would bring the history of metaphysics to a close.²¹

At first sight in fact, Schelling's first philosophical essay "On The Possibility of a Form for Philosophy,"²² published in 1794, appears to be nothing more than a translation into old fashioned jargon of thoughts better expressed in Fichte's "Concept of a Theory of Science," which had

¹⁹ See Johann Friedrich Flatt, *Briefe über den moralischen Erkenntnisgrund der Religion überhaupt und besonders in Beziehung auf die Kantische Philosophie*, Tübingen, 1789. Another source for Schelling's radical Kantianism might well have been Carl Immanuel Diez, who was a "Repetent" or Tutor in Tübingen from 1790 to 1792. So far, none of Diez's writings have been published. Immanuel Niethammer received a letter from Conz claiming that Diez claimed that "Kant was the Messiah, Jesus a charlatan," *G.S.A.* VII₁, 389. Dieter Henrich, who has consulted Diez' literary remains, claims that Diez was responsible for both the radicalism and the hostility to authority evident in Schelling's early writings; Henrich admits, however, that Diez was himself wary of offending the authorities in any way. As Diez did not publish or circulate any of his writings it would seem that his influence on Schelling must have been most pronounced while Diez was still teaching at the *Stift*, i.e. from 1790 to 1792. At this time, none of Schelling's writings suggest that he was already a "Kantian engagé". Until Diez's writings are published, the entire relationship between Diez and Schelling must remain completely conjectural. Compare, *G.S.A.* VII₁, 389.

²⁰ Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, in *Werke in sechs Bänden*, Weischedel ed. 1954-1964, II, 41.

²¹ Schelling, I, 72.

²² "Über die Möglichkeit einer Form der Philosophie überhaupt," (Tübingen, 1794) printed in Schelling, I, 45-73.

been published a few months earlier. By enthusiastically acclaiming Fichte's philosophy and posing as an amateur preparing the way for a real philosopher, Schelling himself was at least partially responsible for this impression.²³ But despite Schelling's somewhat disingenuous diffidence, and his sincere attempt to integrate his own work into Fichte's philosophical framework, the reader must not overlook the crucial difference between Fichte's essay and Schelling's first major philosophical effort.

Schelling, while paying token homage to the primacy of "practical reason," did not agree with Fichte that moral judgement should be the model for all other modes of thinking. Believing that human freedom was manifest in moral man's unending struggle to subject human passion to the edicts of his will, Fichte felt that this freedom could be extended from the moral sphere to that of human knowledge. The free man was for Fichte not a passive instrument of circumstance or a passive observer of the facts. Rather, the free man was one who was engaged in an endless struggle to make the world about him conform to his own freedom.²⁴ Schelling, however, believed that human freedom was not so much the struggle for mastery as it was man's total awareness of himself as a free cause of all things.²⁵ The ego was not simply engaged in an eternal quest for self-realization, but was already the absolute principle of all knowledge and reality. Fichte's insistence on striving as a chief characteristic of human freedom had led him to accept the "real world," existing institutions, sciences, and arts, as testing grounds for the free man.²⁶ Schelling, however, starting in his first philosophical essay with the concept of the ego as absolute, soon came to feel that the discovery of human freedom implied a revolutionary reappraisal of all existing social, natural and aesthetic forms.²⁷

At first, however, these differences were scarcely perceptible. Schelling considered Fichte his honored teacher and Fichte acknowledged Schelling

²³ For Schelling's diffident attitude see Schelling I, 48-49; also his letter to Fichte of September 26, 1794 in J. G. Fichte, *Briefwechsel*, ed. Hans Schulz, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1925) I, 403.

²⁴ Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Ausgewählte Werke in sechs Bänden*, Fritz Medicus, ed., (Leipzig, 1911), I, 150, henceforth cited as Fichte, *Werke*.

²⁵ Schelling, I, 62, note 1; I, 60, note 1.

²⁶ For Fichte's toleration of existing institutions see especially his "Zurückforderung der Denkfreiheit . . ." written in 1793, in Fichte, *Sämtliche Werke*, J. H. Fichte, ed., 8 v., (Berlin, 1845-47) esp. VI p. 5-6. Fichte's political thought, even during his most "Jacobin" stage was characterized by extreme unwillingness to unleash the forces of revolt as well as by a pessimistic undertone which continually stressed that the Millennium which he is proclaiming will never be attained. For Fichte's acceptance of existing science see Fichte *Werke*, I, 181. For his acceptance of the trustworthiness of normal human feelings see I, 57, note.

²⁷ Schelling, I, 80-81.

as a new and brilliant follower. Both Fichte and Schelling believed that they were engaged in different aspects of the same undertaking, and shared philosophical aims.²⁸ Schelling, in "On the Possibility of a Form for Philosophy," tried to continue the work which Fichte had begun by showing that not only formal logic, but even the systematic form of philosophy itself, received their ultimate sanction from the unity of the absolute ego.²⁹

Fichte, in his essays "Review of Aenesidemus"³⁰ and "A Concept for a Theory of Science,"³¹ had derived consciousness, the first principle of theoretical philosophy, from a free, though unconscious act of the ego.³² By this act, the ego actively opposed to itself the non-ego, and thus supplied the object which consciousness encountered in experience.³³ This act of the ego, however, in turn depended on an even more primary act of the ego through which the ego posited itself.³⁴ This primal act described in the first principle (or *Grundsatz*) of all philosophy as "Ego-Ego," structured all human thought processes, in science³⁵ and in morals,³⁶ and could be derived, according to Fichte, from the entire history of self-consciousness.³⁷

Still, in both these essays, Fichte had explicitly presupposed the existence of formal logic as the highest authority on form in philosophy.³⁸ This lacuna Schelling tried to fill in his essay by deriving the basic logical laws of identity and contradiction from the dynamic self-explication of the absolute ego described in Fichte's *Grundsatz*. The result of this attempted tour de force (which Fichte had carefully circumvented) was that Schelling imposed onto Fichte's argument a completely different estimation of

²⁸ See letter from Schelling to Fichte, September 26, 1794 in J. G. Fichte, *Briefwechsel*, I, 403; letter from Fichte to Reinhold, July 2, 1795, *ibid.*, 481 and letter from Schelling to Hegel, January 1795, *Briefe von und an Hegel*, Joannes Hoffmeister ed., 4 vol., (Hamburg, 1952-54) I, 13-15; henceforth cited as Hegel, *Briefe*.

²⁹ Schelling, I, 51.

³⁰ "Rezension, *Aenesidemus, oder über die Fundamente der von dem Herrn Prof. Reinhold in Jena gelieferten Elementar-Philosophie Nebst einer Vertheidigung des Skepticismus gegen die Anmassungen der Vernunftkritik*, 1792. 445 S. 8". (First printed in *Allgemeiner Literatur Zeitung*, Jena, 1794) printed in Fichte, I, 131-153 and in Fichte, *Gesamtausgabe*, I₂, 41-67. Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Gesamtausgabe der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, ed. Reinhard Lauth and Hans Jacob, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1965. Henceforth cited as above. The book *Aenesidemus* was written by Gottlob Ernst Schulze; cf. Fichte, *Gesamtausgabe*, I₂, 41.

³¹ "Über den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre oder der sogenannte Philosophie," Weimar, 1794 (now printed in Fichte, *Werke*, I, 157-215 and in Fichte, *Gesamtausgabe*, I₂, 303-349).

³² Fichte, *Werke*, I, 144; cf. I, 136, 209 ff.

³³ *Ibid.*, I, 138.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 144.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 211-212.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 151.

³⁷ Fichte, *Gesamtausgabe*, I₂, 147.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, I₂, 148. Fichte, *Briefwechsel*, I, 326.

the kind of knowledge man could have of the first principle (*Grundsatz*) of the new science and of the function of this "*Wissenschaftslehre*" in organizing experience. While Fichte believed that he had discovered the abstract principles of human knowledge "through a history of human self-consciousness," Schelling claimed that what Fichte had discovered was the first principle, not only of human knowledge, but of all reality at well.

Both Fichte and Schelling agreed that "consciousness" was capable of conceiving the *Grundsatz*, or first principle, although it could never itself achieve the vision of the Absolute Ego of which this *Grundsatz* was an expression.³⁹ But this agreement concealed two quite different interpretations of what the word "consciousness" meant. Fichte, following Reinhold, believed that the human mind was capable of conceiving abstractly the transcendent forces which conditioned consciousness. Consciousness itself, however, was restricted to awareness of "things in time and space" of which alone "certain knowledge" was possible. Beyond consciousness, the mind had no real object to focus on and its theoretical insights here were necessarily abstract and partial. Schelling on the other hand, following another intellectual trend begun by Kant, believed that the kind of knowledge concerned with things in time and space, called "consciousness," was necessarily partial and subjective. Man could have "absolute knowledge" of the absolute ego alone and this knowledge, though different in kind, was more rather than less sure than the knowledge man had as consciousness.⁴⁰ This "higher" form of knowledge Schelling was soon to call *intellectual intuition*. In "On the Possibility of a Form of Philosophy," Schelling called this sublime kind of knowledge the "absolute in human knowledge."⁴¹

For Fichte, only indirect and abstract insight into the absolute source of all knowledge was possible. Through abstraction and reflection it was possible to achieve insight into what this absolute source must be, from what it was not, and so attain a high enough degree of certainty of it to formulate the *Grundsatz*. But human knowledge could never ascend to a vision of the ego in its absolute, original freedom, or to a vision of the ultimate object (*Ding an sich*) posited by the ego. By seeing the *Grundsatz* at work, abstraction could derive the *Grundsatz* itself. This was the highest form of knowledge accessible to man.⁴²

Schelling, on the other hand, thought that not only the *Grundsatz* itself,

³⁹ Fichte, *Werke*, I, 10, 22, 80; Schelling, I, 60, note 1.

⁴⁰ Fichte, *Werke*, I, 209.

⁴¹ Schelling, I, 52, note 1.

⁴² Fichte, *Werke*, I, 202, 211.

but also its content, was self-evident.⁴³ Earlier philosophers such as Leibniz and Descartes had tried to base all reality on the self-certainly of the thinking ego.⁴⁴ Theoretical philosophy, however, being a science of "consciousness," could never by itself achieve a clear vision of the ego in its freedom. But the knowledge of the ego of itself constituted a higher form of knowledge which while self-evident not only transcended but also unified theoretical and practical knowledge.⁴⁵ Though Schelling went to great trouble not to contradict the letter of Fichte's statement, he boldly converted Fichte's epistemological concern into a metaphysical one. The *Grundsatz* did not have to be derived from a history of the human spirit; it was intuited directly as the "absolute in human knowledge." And this fundamental disagreement with Fichte found its expression not only in Schelling's formal, philosophical argument, but also in his completely different estimation of the philosophical status of language.

While Fichte had little faith in words and concepts, and always wrote as if what he was saying barely approximated his thought, Schelling had great faith in the truthfulness of language.⁴⁶ Many of his best arguments relied on a careful analysis of the meaning of words, for Schelling believed in the real existence of archetypes. Every form concealed primal form, and indeed Schelling was trying to find the *Urform* for philosophy. By achieving knowledge of this *Urform*, man won direct access to the Absolute.⁴⁷

Fichte preferred to make a much more limited argument for the underlying *Grundsatz* of his *Wissenschaftslehre*. He claimed only that human thought had always worked unconsciously in accordance with its laws, and that from no other *Grundsatz* could all the motions of the mind be derived.⁴⁸ The *Grundsatz* could be demonstrated through what Fichte called a "pragmatic history of the human spirit," and in "On a Concept for a Theory of Science," he was far more intent on explaining than on changing human thought. The 'pragmatic history of the human spirit' not only proved that human freedom underlay the speculative ventures of man, but simultaneously acknowledged the relative validity of conventional interpretations of the world. Consequently, Fichte drew very cautious theological inferences from his philosophical position;⁴⁹ such tenets of Natural Religion as belief in God, in immortality, and in the infinite perfectibility of man, were not only permissible, but necessary con-

⁴³ Schelling, I, 52.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 61, note 1.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 62, note 1.

⁴⁶ Fichte, *Gesamtausgabe*, I₂, 118.

⁴⁷ Schelling, I, 47.

⁴⁸ Fichte, *Gesamtausgabe*, I₂, 140; I₂, 143.

⁴⁹ Fichte, *Gesamtausgabe*, I₂, 342.

sequences of the encounter of human freedom and an obdurate world. While insisting that man must assert his freedom, Fichte believed that man had no choice but to fill his imagination with such surrogates of freedom in order to comprehend the eternal cleavage between himself as an imperfect being, and the absolute nature of the ego within him.⁵⁰

Fichte was primarily concerned in "On a Concept for a Theory of Science" with "theoretical philosophy" (the exact sciences, "consciousness," and the tenets of Natural Religion) and did not think that he had discovered some absolute principle which could be grasped in contemplation. He claimed only to have established that human freedom – manifest in morality – was behind all meaningful human speculation. Though men, in speaking abstractly for what was right, might be as Kant suggested quite ineffectual in the "world" where nature laid down the rules, man's moral sense stemmed from the basic impulse of his nature to be free. Man must struggle perpetually for a reconciliation between his autonomy and the nature of things. Indeed, this striving to act, this moral sense, was man's assurance of his own free nature and of the unity of his experience in a world in which he often was at the mercy of the facts. Reason for Fichte therefore was primarily "practical."⁵¹ As, however, this battle for freedom never could be won, certain imaginary buttresses of the autonomy of men emerged in consciousness. So the meaningfulness of this struggle was reinforced by the belief in immortality, and the belief in victory, by the belief in God. Still, though science and faith aided men in their struggle, awareness of freedom stemmed solely from striving to be free.⁵²

Schelling, on the other hand, ignored completely the caution with which Fichte had induced only the structure rather than the content of human freedom from man's real knowledge of the world. Seeing only that Fichte had shown that all knowledge and all reality in the world could be deduced from a power whose absolute freedom man could share, Schelling ignored Fichte's insistence that real knowledge was possible only as "consciousness" and loudly proclaimed that by intuiting the absolute ego, prior to both human self-consciousness and external reality, man had indeed freed himself from the dominion of objects and of objective truth.⁵³

Schelling's dream, expressed in "On the Oldest Myth," that man could escape from the false world of the imagination through reason and achieve

⁵⁰ Fichte, *Gesamtausgabe*, I₂, 65.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² The clearest presentation of Fichte's ethical thought during the early nineties is, *Einige Vorlesungen über die Bestimmung des Gelehrten*, Jena, 1794, in Fichte, *Werke*, I, 219–274.

⁵³ Schelling, I, 81–82.

legislative power over all reality, now received new meaning. For in "On the Possibility of a Form of Philosophy in General," man no longer was only the legislator for all laws of science and morals, as he had been already for Kant, but was also the source of "objectivity" in the world. Man was no longer a victim of, but a free source of the facts. Everything that was stemmed from the absolute freedom of his own being. A new universe of knowledge was now possible, as comprehensive as Spinoza's system, but illustrating not human acquiescence, but human freedom.⁵⁴

Schelling in fact intended that his first book, *On the Ego*,⁵⁵ published in 1795, be a rebuttal (*ein Gegenstück*) to Spinoza's *Ethics* which would "free men from their slavery to objective truth" and convince them that they themselves were the source of all truth and all reality.⁵⁶ If men would only become aware of themselves as totally free beings, capable of asserting the freedom of the absolute ego within them in "intellectual intuition," they would soon realize that their acts could fully express their moral intentions.⁵⁷ First the sciences and then mankind itself would be unified, as men, realizing that they shared unrestricted sovereignty over the world, would join together in obeying laws stemming from human autonomy.⁵⁸

Schelling hoped to inaugurate this process by demonstrating that the absolute ego latent within men was the first principle of all truth⁵⁹ and the ultimate source of all reality.⁶⁰ Schelling here suggested a pantheism as rigorous as that of Spinoza but resting not on "Nature" or „Substance" but on the free ego.⁶¹ From the absolute ego not only the world and knowledge but also morality could be derived.⁶² And where Spinoza had held that the wise man saw the necessity of all things,⁶³ Schelling believed that

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 80-83.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 75-166.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 79-82.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 81.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 82.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 79.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 100.

⁶¹ "Philosophy has found in the ego its *en kai pan* (F. N. Lessing's abbreviation for Spinoza's pantheism) which until today it has striven to attain as its highest goal." *ibid.*, I, 117.

⁶² *Ibid.*, I, 166.

⁶³ "The doctrine is good . . . (2) Inasmuch as it teaches us, how we ought to conduct ourselves with respect to the gifts of fortune, or matters which are not in our power, and do not follow from our nature. For it shows us, that we should await and endure fortune's smiles or frowns with an equal mind, seeing that all things follow from the eternal decree of God by the same necessity, as it follows from the essence of a triangle, that the three angles are equal to two right angles. "*Ethics*, Part 2, Prop. XLVIII in Benedict de Spinoza, *The Chief Works*, trans. R. H. M. Elwes, New York, 1951 (Dover) II, 126.

it was incumbent upon man to make all his acts correspond to his inalienable freedom.⁶⁴

Before 1795, Schelling had believed that awareness of the absolute nature of human freedom implied the struggle for mastery not only over the physical world but over society and politics.⁶⁵ While writing *On the Ego*, however, he came to share Spinoza's view that individual moral acts, like other happenings in the world of appearance, were "figments of the imagination."⁶⁶ Man, in fact, was sure and free only while thinking himself in intellectual intuition.⁶⁷ Indeed, as a being capable of grasping the absolute within himself through intellectual intuition, man should destroy in his mind all the forms which limited and structured the world. From this insight, however, Schelling refused to draw conclusions of moral quiescence.

Man, as a sentient being living in the world (while in thought lifting himself out of the world), should contribute by his acts to the unending task of making the living and visible world correspond to his thought.⁶⁸ Not only a "spirit" but also a finite being, partaking of the absolute freedom of the ego, man should exercise his transcendental freedom by trying to make the world about him correspond to the rationality inherent in his mind.⁶⁹ Though man could never make the world of appearance *correspond* to his own free nature,⁷⁰ he was capable of making his moral acts *reflect* this freedom.⁷¹ Man was not only capable of intuiting the absolute ego within himself in a mystic state; he was also capable of trying to impose his new-won freedom onto matter and society by participating in the attempt to achieve the unattainable goal of making the world outside him correspond to this freedom.

In spite of this dualistic juxtaposition of intellectual intuition and human practice, Schelling tried in *On the Ego* to deduce from the total freedom of the absolute ego some extremely radical moral, ethical and political consequences.⁷² In one of his most striking arguments, he suggested that moral action was itself the meaning of history. In fact, the absolute ego created the world so that the ego could achieve tangible victory over

⁶⁴ Schelling, I, 123. "Be absolute, identical with yourself."

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 122, note; see also I, 81.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 120. Schelling believed that the imagination, which deals with particulars of any kind – in contrast to intellectual intuition – is the source of all error. *Ibid.*, I, 109, note 1. It can be shown that Schelling included individual moral acts in the class of these confusing particulars. *Ibid.*, I, 121.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 101, 105, 106.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 124-125.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 158-164.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 133.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, I, 162.

⁷² *Ibid.*, I, 106, 117, note 1.

the non-ego.⁷³ Schelling also envisioned an ideal society in which duty and right were identical, freedom achieved, and coercion unnecessary.⁷⁴ Still, by stressing that man was capable of becoming aware of his freedom in intellectual intuition and destroying in his intellect all the bifurcations of the world, Schelling suggested that above human self-expression in the world lay a higher realm of pure awareness. Morality, while pointing the way to true freedom, nevertheless paled beside the mystic heights of intellectual intuition where this freedom was fully revealed.⁷⁵ In demonstrating the absolute quality of this freedom, he had denigrated morality itself to the "lower" world of human experience.

The technical arguments in the body of *On the Ego* had the effect of reinforcing this emphasis, and Schelling's original hope that men might achieve both insight and justice in the world was modified by the suggestion that man, while capable of infinite improvement, could never consummate his quest for freedom on the ground of morality alone.⁷⁶ Despite man's quest for freedom through history, the final goal of the absolute ego itself remained to destroy "the world as world."⁷⁷

Both Hölderlin and Hegel felt that Schelling was being led astray by his mystical tendencies from their common mission of teaching men to be both spiritually and morally free. Hegel, in a letter to Schelling in 1795, the year *On the Ego* appeared, politely suggested that a philosophy of the ego was all well and good for the philosopher, but that ordinary men must be made aware of their dignity and their rights by an exposé of the repressive ideologies imposed upon them by their masters.⁷⁸ Hölderlin, sensing that art might communicate the truth both more easily and more adequately than "intellectual intuition," commented to his friends that Schelling was on the wrong course,⁷⁹ and pondered in private on philo-

⁷³ *Ibid.*, I, 163, note.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 157, note.

⁷⁵ While the ego posits itself in intellectual intuition (*Ibid.*, I, 105) and tries to destroy the world as world (I, 125), morality is only an unending attempt to achieve the impossible, to make the non-ego correspond to the laws of the ego (I, 162.) Throughout *On the Ego*, Schelling contrasts the ego living in the world with the ego in intellectual intuition. So, for example, even self-consciousness, the awareness of self in experience, is not a state of freedom but only, like morality, a striving (*streben*) of the human ego, partially constricted by the non-ego, to save its own identity (I, 104).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 121.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 115, note 2.

⁷⁸ Hegel's letter to Schelling of April 16, 1795 (Hegel, *Briefe* I, 23-24). That Schelling accepted much of Hegel's criticism is evident from his answer of July 21, 1795, in which he apologized for *On the Ego* by saying that he had not yet learned about men. He had expected too much from their good will and their intuitive powers. Still he hopes that he will eventually be able to undo the damage which he has done; see Hegel, *Briefe* I, 28.

⁷⁹ Letter from Hölderlin to Niethammer, December 22, 1795, *G.S.A.* VI₁, 191.

sophers who abandoned self-consciousness for dangerous mystic delights.⁸⁰ Unwilling to part intellectual company with his friends, Schelling was moved by their criticism to try to present his ideas in a form which would be compatible with their mutual goals. In his *Philosophical Letters*, Schelling answered Hölderlin's objections that art rather than speculative insight best reconciled the absolute with human striving, and also attempted to make human moral perfectibility a central characteristic of his vision of human freedom.

Schelling's *Philosophical Letters*,⁸¹ published in the winter of 1795-96, were addressed to an unnamed correspondent who shared not only Schelling's pantheistic world-view, but also his profound contempt for those "vulgar Kantians" who, assuming the fallibility of human reason, held that a determinist world-order and moral freedom had to be reconciled through "moral postulates." This correspondent, however, though agreeing with Schelling that good intentions were futile in a world governed by hostile objective causes, concluded that man had no choice but either to assert his freedom by fighting to the death for his principles or to accept the objective world-order as it was.⁸² And the only alternative to the moral quietism of this philosophy of acceptance, claimed Schelling's correspondent, was the stance of the tragic hero. While artists could communicate the unity of existence, either through a lyric reverie or through depicting the heroic though futile freedom of the tragic hero, philosophers, compelled by their trade to acknowledge the eternal cleavage between freedom and necessity, were driven to dogmatism (i.e., determinism) or skepticism.⁸³ As we shall see, Hölderlin held these views while writing the early versions of *Hyperion*, and thus the unnamed correspondent was almost certainly Hölderlin, with whom Schelling was engaged during the fall of 1795 in long and heated discussions.⁸⁴

Hölderlin, though in Jena an enthusiastic student of Fichte's, was questioning precisely those elements of Fichte's thinking which appealed most to Schelling. He felt that by resting his case on the sublime unity of the absolute ego, Fichte was opening the flood gates to superstition and moral

⁸⁰ See fragment in *G.S.A.* IV₁, 216-217.

⁸¹ *Philosophische Briefe über Dogmatismus und Kriticismus*, first published in *Philosophischer Journal*, Jena, 1795 (though part of the vol. for 1795 was published in 1796); in Schelling, I, 205-65.

⁸² Though the *Philosophical Letters* do not include any letters written by the correspondent, Schelling often answers objections to his views which the correspondent is supposed to be making. It is from these replies that I have drawn my picture of the correspondent. *Ibid.*, I, 208-24.

⁸³ See esp. *Ibid.*, I, 260.

⁸⁴ Cf. *Fuhrmans* I, 55-59 (esp. p. 56, note 2 and p. 57, note 3). Compare also Ernst Müller, *Hölderlin: Studien*, 159-167.

quietism. For without reflection and self-consciousness – which both Fichte and Schelling conceded was absent in intellectual intuition – man lost rational control over the world in which he lived.⁸⁵ Schelling was convinced by Hölderlin that it was a mistake to derive moral and political freedom from a doctrine which in itself suggested mystic withdrawal from the world.

In his *Philosophical Letters*, Schelling admitted that intellectual intuition was common to all serious philosophers, be they pantheists, mystics, or voluntarists like himself.⁸⁶ In fact, were it not for the problems raised by human experience, there would be no disagreement among philosophers.⁸⁷ The difference between the mystic and the free man lay not in their vision of the absolute, but in the role of this vision in structuring experience. For the mystic and the pantheist, the absolute was, or was about to be, realized in the world. For the free man, though it was the goal and purpose of all his act, it remained forever unattainable in the world.⁸⁸

In the *Philosophical Letters*, Schelling was admitting that man and world would never be completely reconciled in history, but he insisted nevertheless that through his own free choice such a reconciliation must be the ultimate goal of the free man.⁸⁹ While for the free man awareness of the absolute integrity of his ego and intellectual intuition was the cardinal principle of his speculation, his acts had to express his unending quest to achieve on earth the truth he himself had posited in his total self-assertion. The actions of the free man had to reflect his participation in the human condition; he was committed to the struggle to master objects and relate to his fellow men. To choose to remain in the state of intellectual intuition would be to follow the mystic in rejecting life by denying the reality of human experience. The free man, on the other hand, by making all his acts reflect his attained spiritual freedom could and must act in the world without, however, ever becoming himself a victim of the facts.⁹⁰

Schelling now recognized that his earlier philosophical mysticism was suited only to “gods free from effort and care” and not to men.⁹¹ The

⁸⁵ See letter from Hölderlin to Hegel, January 26, 1795, *G.S.A.* VI₁, 155-156. This thought is developed in a short fragment written in April, 1795. Cf. Dieter Henrich, “Hölderlin über Urteil und Sein,” *Hölderlin Jahrbuch*, XIV, 1965-66, 73-96.

⁸⁶ Schelling, I, 250-251.

⁸⁷ Both “dogmatic” and “critical” philosophers find it easy to deal with the absolute but difficult to deal with the “riddle of the world.” *Ibid.*, I, 234, see also I, 250-253.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 255-258.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 248-250.

⁹⁰ “In fact, it is only the use which we make of the absolute in discovering our mission within moral philosophy which justifies our contemplation of the Absolute.” *Ibid.*, I, 257.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, I, 248.

philosophy of the free man elaborated in the *Philosophical Letters* was committed to spreading the truth which would make men free – not only in their thoughts but also in their lives. Any other way of reconciling man and nature except through human freedom was illusory and only contributed to human wretchedness.⁹² As only consciousness of freedom could make men free, he should expect no help from the external world. Only self-assertion in intellectual intuition and not a vision either of the past or of the future could be a standard for the acts of the free man. Only he who chose to be spiritually free could be morally and politically free.⁹³

Schelling held that the current state of the sciences, of political and legal theory, of theology and even of philosophy revealed that this freedom had yet to be achieved. But in the last analysis Schelling did not really believe that the state, society and law could be reformed, for it was the state itself, law itself, which did not correspond to human freedom. The few isolated comments on politics which can be found in Schelling's early writings reveal an extreme form of anarchism which rejects out of hand both law and government.⁹⁴ Finding no counterpart to his vision of human freedom in history or in political theory, Schelling insisted that the sense of freedom gained in intellectual intuition was the only sure standard for human decisions.

More moderate in his philosophical position than Schelling, Hölderlin was dissatisfied with the austerity of Schelling's vision. Hölderlin agreed with Schelling that the attempt by the vulgar Kantians to buttress traditional theology by moral arguments and to ignore rational criticism of tradition by stressing the fallibility of human knowledge was itself a misuse of reason.⁹⁵ And Schelling accepted in the most general way Hölderlin's alternative to the vulgar Kantians: his emphasis on human struggle. Hölderlin, however, believed that human freedom should be conceived in analogy to the encounter of freedom and destiny in tragedy, which consequently was a perfect medium for communicating the idea of human freedom. While Schelling conceded that a tragic view of the world might be

⁹² *Ibid.*, I, 262.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, I, 265.

⁹⁴ The aim of all our moral striving is to "identify duty and law. Wherever law must be enforced through coercion, force violates freedom." (*Ibid.*, I, 157 note 1.) This thought is developed in Schelling's very obscure "Neue Deduktion des Naturrechts," written in 1795, published in *Philosophischem Journal*, Jena, 1796-97, printed in Schelling, I, 171-204. This anarchistic view finds concrete expression in, "Das älteste Systemprogramm . . ." where the state is seen as a machine which treats men as cogs. Schelling intends to expose "such miserable human artifacts" as the state, constitutions, and governments through a historical critique. In place of these, Schelling envisions "absolute freedom for all spirits who carry within them the ideal world" and do not "seek God or immortality outside of themselves." *Fuhrmans*, I, 69-70.

⁹⁵ Schelling, I, 214.

legitimate in art he insisted that it did not stand up to the tribunal of reason. In general, at this stage of his development Schelling distinguished between art and the new philosophy of freedom. Tragedy like any art form was a product of the imagination which presupposed total commitment to an "objective" world on the part of the artist and therefore precluded true freedom.⁹⁶ In particular, he insisted that Hölderlin's "tragic vision" could only achieve the semblance of freedom.⁹⁷ Hölderlin's conception of human struggle itself implied belief in an objective world order and was incompatible with a philosophy of freedom. If an objective world order was assumed, then any assertion of human freedom was doomed from the outset.⁹⁸

Thus Schelling, the most poetic of the philosophers of German Idealism and personally inclined to move in literary circles, denied poets access to the truth. It must be remembered that the chief aim of German Idealism was to find a form of thinking attuned to ultimate reality. In this quest, the Idealists encountered the romantic poets, also profoundly affected by Kant, who shared with the philosophers an intense hunger for reality and meaning. For example, Schiller and Hölderlin, while intensely conscious of what the philosophers were doing, hoped that art might become a more perfect medium for expressing the truth than abstract speculation burdened by the immense ballast of tradition.

Schelling also differed profoundly from Fichte in his estimation of art. While Fichte tried to harmonize belief and knowledge, aesthetic receptivity and active understanding, Schelling believed that the aesthetic was only a primitive and outdated form of philosophical insight. Fichte felt that art could attain insight into ultimate reality by expressing feelings which could not be grasped by reason; Schelling believed that art was doomed to error from the outset by its commitment to feelings and the imagination. For Schelling the imagination was a spurious form of human activity by which the mind falsely imputed reality to the world of appearance. By committing himself totally to the comprehension of the "object," in effect by acquiescing in it, the poet hoped to win a semblance of freedom. But dedication to the object could not be reconciled with the sovereign autonomy of the ego. The aesthetic experience, while a sublime cousin to dogmatic philosophy, was nevertheless inimical to human freedom. It is

⁹⁶ "The imagination could be explained as the faculty by which we make ourselves totally passive through total activity." *Ibid.*, I, 256. In other words, the imagination imparts meaning to objects which they reasonably do not merit.

⁹⁷ By the beginning of the tenth letter, Schelling believes that he has demonstrated that a tragic view of the world is legitimate for art but not for reason. *Ibid.*, I, 260.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 258.

apparent to any reader that Fichte was personally indifferent to art, while Schelling had extremely developed aesthetic sensibilities. How then can this extreme iconoclasm of Schelling be explained?

Schelling was engaged in his early writings in a quest for a new, free counterpart to the old passive mystic path. A primary characteristic of his vision of freedom was the denial of reality to the "object." In this undertaking he felt threatened by the poets, whom he saw as engaged in a search for the "object." Man would somehow be reimbursed for the richness he lost in experience by the plenitude of being imparted to his thought by his awareness of freedom. For the absolute ego was so rich in content that it could be the source and end of all human acts and ideas. The aura of unreality which the rejection of the aesthetic implied would be more than offset by a new intense awareness of human vocation. Schelling's vision of human freedom, however, was suitable only for a small intellectual elite. Even if intellectual intuition of the reality of unattainable inner moral and spiritual goals was possible, it, like the old mystic path, was most certainly open only to the few.⁹⁹

Schelling in his *Philosophical Letters* had attempted to reply to the criticism of his friends that his philosophical views had little ethical import and implied a withdrawn elitist attitude towards human affairs. And he did concede to his friends that the free man was committed to experience and must attempt to make the social and natural world around him conform to the dictates of his reason. Nevertheless, he insisted that this venture would never be fully consummated in the real, visible world. Whatever reason there was in human experience received its ultimate sanction solely from the solitary majesty of the sovereign ego knowing itself in intellectual intuition. Like Plato's philosopher, however, the free man must return to the cave. The principle of rationality which governed his own spiritual life was by no means immanent in experience and could be only partially imposed upon it. The ordinary men he encountered could share with the philosopher a sense of freedom by striving through ethical conduct to make the world about them conform to the dictates of their reason. But only the philosopher was fully conscious of his freedom.¹⁰⁰

Shortly after completing his *Philosophical Letters* Schelling speculated, in writings very much influenced by Hölderlin and certainly not intended for publication, whether there might not be another way besides ethics by

⁹⁹ For Schelling's views on this intellectual elite see Schelling, I, 204, 265, and especially his letter to Obereit of March 12, 1796, in *Plitt*, I, 88-89. Contrast to this view of a small group of men intellectually capable of comprehending their freedom, Fichte's more democratic ideas, brilliantly presented in *Medicus*, *op. cit.*, 118-119.

¹⁰⁰ See *ante* note 90.

which this gulf between the philosopher and his fellow mortals could be bridged. In his "Fragment for a System," (extant only in a copy made by Hegel without title or signature)¹⁰¹ and his letter of March 21, 1796, to Obereit,¹⁰² an unknown aged scholar who had written him a lengthy letter, Schelling called for a "new mythology" which would convey in aesthetic form for ordinary men the conclusions of the philosophy of freedom. This new mythology – which Schelling contrasted with the popular theology of established religion – would root out the source of popular superstition by destroying the cleavage between the views of ordinary men and those of the philosophical elite.¹⁰³

Influenced by Hölderlin, Schelling seemed to abandon his earlier insistence that the imagination as such belonged not to human freedom but to the "objective world." He suggested in "A Fragment for a System" that through a new mythology the creative imagination could be put to the service of reason.¹⁰⁴ In this context the vision of mythology was really nothing more than a device to bridge the gap between the consciousness of philosophical and ordinary man. But in this unpublished and unpublishable text of 1796, Schelling already went beyond this idea to express a thought which was to reappear only in 1801 at the conclusion of his *System of Transcendental Idealism*.¹⁰⁵ Without integrating it into the main course of his argument Schelling prophesied that the day might come when the task of academic philosophy might be completed, and a new philosophy and a new poetry might express the vision of freedom won through speculation.¹⁰⁶ Stressing that the philosopher needed the same aesthetic sensibilities as the poet, Schelling suggested that the highest idea which alone could encompass all the ideas of reason was that of beauty.¹⁰⁷

Schelling, in response to the criticism of his friends – especially Hölder-

¹⁰¹ "Das älteste Systemfragment des deutschen Idealismus," in Franz Rosenzweig, *Kleinere Schriften*, (Berlin 1937) 232-234, also in *G.S.A.*, IV₁, 297-299. During the long debate to establish the authorship of "Das älteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus," the interplay between Hölderlin and Schelling was subjected to meticulous scrutiny. It is now generally accepted that Schelling, as Franz Rosenzweig suggested, was the author; this in any case is the view of such leading scholars as Hoffmeister, Fuhrmans and Beissner. Herbert Marcuse in his *Reason and Revolution* still contends that Hegel is the author, though he does not support this view by any substantial arguments. For a complete bibliography on the authorship of the *Systemprogramm*, see *G.S.A.* IV₁, 425, and *Fuhrmans* I, 55-59. The text is printed in all editions of Hölderlin.

¹⁰² *Plitt*, I, 88-89, cf. letter from Schelling to Obereit, *ibid.*, 82-87.

¹⁰³ *G.S.A.* IV₁, 299, *Plitt*, I, 89.

¹⁰⁴ *G.S.A.* IV₁, 298-299.

¹⁰⁵ F. W. J. Schelling, *System des Transzendentalen Idealismus*, Ruth-Eva Schulz ed. (Hamburg, 1957) 293-298.

¹⁰⁶ *G.S.A.* IV₁, 298.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

lin, with whom he conversed at length during the spring of 1796 in Stuttgart – was willing to reconsider both his austere elitism, which he had arrived at in his *Philosophical Letters*, and his rejection of art as an effective means of popularizing his vision of human freedom. Still, it is clear within the context of Schelling's other writings that this extreme tribute paid to art – that the philosopher must have aesthetic sense – was not really an admission that art rather than philosophy should be a model for speculative reasoning. It was rather simply an admission that intellectual intuition could not be arrived at through discursive reasoning but only through a leap analogous in some way to the creativity of the artist. Even in the "Fragment for a System" the chief emphasis was not on aesthetic truth but on the dependence of theoretical knowledge on practical reason and of practical reason on a self-determination of the ego.¹⁰⁸ In his published writings immediately subsequent to the "Fragment for a System," Schelling made no mention of art or the idea of beauty. And he adhered strictly to his earlier view that the central notion upon which all knowledge depended was the absolute autonomy of the ego or, according to a new phrase, the "self-determination of the Spirit."¹⁰⁹

Even in his published writings of the end of the nineties, where Schelling was concerned no longer primarily with epistemology but with the philosophical study of nature, he still insisted that the universe should be conceived of not as an entity separate and distinct from man, but as derived from and analogous to human freedom.¹¹⁰ It was only in his *System of Transcendental Idealism*, published in 1801, that Schelling publicly asserted that not philosophy but art, as an expression of the fundamental unity of subject and object, was the highest form of human spirituality.¹¹¹ But even here he still insisted that though art was the canon from which the principles of philosophical reason should be derived, philosophy still originated in the choice of the philosopher to assert his autonomy.¹¹²

Schelling in his writings to 1801 attempted to solve consecutively two problems: how to derive all of human experience from human freedom and how to integrate self and world, freedom and nature. In his "Fragment for a System," written at just the moment when, beleaguered by his

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ "Abhandlungen zur Erläuterung des Idealismus der Wissenschaftslehre," Schelling, I, 320.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 270, note.

¹¹¹ Schelling, *System*, 297–298.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 297, 200.

¹¹³ For the influence of Hölderlin on Schelling cf. Rosenzweig, *Kleinere Schriften*, 271–273, Müller, *Hölderlin-Studien*, 146–173, Hoffmeister, *Hölderlin und die Philosophie*, 58–86.

friends, he was turning from the first question to the second, Schelling tried momentarily to make art the link between these two lines of philosophical inquiry. Reflecting the influence of Hölderlin on his thinking, convincing neither himself nor his reader, Schelling argued that in the course of its own self-discovery the human spirit would eventually discover in the beautiful the means whereby it could find itself in the world, and that it was in art that human freedom and nature reached a state of perfect equipoise.¹¹³

Within the context of Schelling's philosophical development it should be evident that the poetry alluded to in the "Fragment for a System" was really a sort of philosophizing, an expression in universal language of the same decision to assert human autonomy as the more technical ventures in which he himself was engaged. Hölderlin, on the other hand, though he insisted on informing himself of the latest developments in philosophy, believed that the poetic process itself rather than philosophizing was the best description of the process of human self-discovery.¹¹⁴ Poetry for Hölderlin, far from being a way to express in universal language the conclusions of philosophical speculation, was itself the sublime expression of the commitment of man to experience. As such it was the source and not only the ultimate consequence of valid philosophical reasoning.¹¹⁵

It was Hölderlin, not Schelling, who by his own effort tried to create a new poetry which would realize the promise that the beautiful, as the concrete expression of the universal unity of man and experience in intellectual intuition, would integrate self and world and reconcile experience and human freedom. Schelling in his comments on art came close to succumbing to the temptation of making normative philosophical principles out of the irrational prophecies of art without thinking concretely about the way in which art could bridge the gap between philosophical insight and concrete human experience.¹¹⁶ Hölderlin, on the contrary, believed that the abstract ideas which he had won in philosophical reasoning were not an end in themselves but simply a program for a completely new art form which would record man's valiant attempts to express within real society the basic needs of his own nature.

Hölderlin did not believe that human freedom could achieve mastery over experience simply by asserting itself and then rediscovering itself through protracted philosophical inquiry within the confines of the objective world. Rather, human freedom had to strive to comprehend and

¹¹⁴ See "Über die Verfahrungsweise des poetischen Geistes" in *G.S.A.* IV₁, 241-265.

¹¹⁵ Letter from Hölderlin to Schiller, September 4, 1795, *G.S.A.* VI₁, 181.

¹¹⁶ This was the view of Haym in his *Hegel und seine Zeit*, Berlin, 1857, 139-142.

structure the world. Art, far from being the final, pure product of the human spirit, incorporating the conclusion of philosophy into its message, was the arena in which the reconciliation between the self and the world, nature and freedom, had to be fought out.¹¹⁷ Perceived in isolation from the rest of his early thought, the highly abstract characterization of art in the "Fragment for a System" seems in perfect accord with Hölderlin's thinking. Still we should not let ourselves be misled to suppose real agreement between Hölderlin and Schelling.⁹ Art, for Schelling, was a dimension of human freedom, which would follow the arduous efforts of human reasoning. For Hölderlin it was the battleground on which the fight for human freedom must be fought.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ See *post* Chapter III.

¹¹⁸ The reason why I have concluded this chapter here is that early in 1796, Schelling jettisoned, or abandoned his initial faith that a new philosophy would serve to inaugurate an immediate political transformation of society. From 1796 to 1801, Schelling was concerned almost exclusively in his philosophical work with the apolitical task of constructing a new philosophy of Nature and relating this to the *Wissenschaftslehre*. The present study, however, is concerned primarily with the impact of the French Revolution, of the crisis of Württemberg society and of the disintegration of the Holy Roman Empire on the thought of Schelling, Hölderlin and Hegel during the nineties. The last two philosophical texts, written by Schelling in the nineties, which are concerned with politics are *Neue Deduktion des Naturrechts* (1796) and "Fragment eines Systems" (1796). Between his departure from Tübingen and his arrival in Jena, Schelling remained personally committed to the ideals and practices of the French government. Immediately after leaving Tübingen he even planned to spend a year in Paris. Indeed, until 1797, he remained politically involved with the pro French faction in Germany and hostile to the Austrian cause. By the time he arrived in Jena, however, Schelling while continuing to back the moderates in the Württemberg Estates lost his enthusiasm for the French cause. When Schelling in his *System des transzendentalen Idealismus* (1801) once again expressed his theoretical views on politics, he kept faith with his earlier ideals. But while he posited the desirability of a republican form of government, governed by laws and not by caprice, he made the foundation of such a free society – which would constitute a "second nature" – a function not of individual acts but of history. The evolution of Schelling's political philosophy, which proceeded hidden from our eyes, consequently parallels Hegel's own development who similarly attempted to reconcile historical force and freedom. There is, however, no evidence that from 1796 to 1801 Schelling's political ideas either influenced, or were influenced by, Hölderlin or Hegel. I do not, however, wish to imply that the course of Schelling's philosophical development from 1796 until he completed his *System des transzendentalen Idealismus* is entirely irrelevant for properly comprehending Hölderlin's or Hegel's subsequent development. In his philosophical essays of the late nineties Hölderlin used several concepts which had just been coined by Schelling either in his *Von der Weltseele* or in his *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur*. Schelling, moreover, in his *Abhandlung zur Erläuterung des Idealismus der Wissenschaftslehre*, written in 1797, was the first to establish a link between the concept of "Geist" and the history of self-consciousness. Both this relationship and the thought that a vision of the Absolute, or God, was both the goal of philosophy and the meaning of creation are central in Hegel's first book, *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1807). Schelling, however, at this time did not think of human history as central to the progressing unfolding of spirit. Presumably a *Naturphilosophie* and a *Wissenschaftslehre* would suffice. (Cf. Schelling, I, 267–377.) The first to relate "Geist" and history was Hölderlin in 1800. By 1801, however, somewhat the same idea can be found in Schelling's *System des transzendentalen Idealismus* where Kant's conception of the "list of reason" is conceived of as a source for faith in God and history appears as the arena for the encounter between the Absolute appearing in time and the individual human will.

CHAPTER III

HÖLDERLIN (1789-1798)

Though by profession not a philosopher but a poet, Hölderlin's intellectual development played a vital role in determining the direction which German Idealist speculation took during the nineties.¹ Reflecting his own enthusiasm for the Girondist phase of the French Revolution, Hölderlin, during his last years at the *Stift* in 1793-1794, had developed a world-view which insisted on the real correspondence of freedom, society and nature. This politically and socially oriented pantheism inspired his friends Hegel and Schelling to seek to integrate these spheres into their own early thought.²

After the failure of the Girondist strategy of "world revolution" in 1793, Hölderlin, disillusioned with the prospects of political reform, tried to preserve his socio-political pantheism by making his own art a medium in which the struggle to unite freedom, nature and society was recorded. By the beginning of 1796, he had come to believe that this reconciliation, which corresponded to the ultimate nature of things, was prefigured in the phenomenon of beauty.³ This vision of the beautiful inspired Schelling to write his "Fragment for a System" in the spring of 1796, and left such a lasting imprint on Hegel's mind that as late as 1800, he claimed that the "presentation of Nature and Destiny" by poets was one of the realities which guaranteed that the state and society could indeed be renovated to conform to freedom and reason.⁴ Hölderlin's valiant attempt after 1797, while writing his tragedy *Empedokles*, to come to grips with

¹ See Johannes Hoffmeister, *Hölderlin und die Philosophie*, (Leipzig, 1942), 18; Ernst Müller, *Hölderlin-Studien zur Geschichte seines Geistes* (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1944), 130; of Ernst Cassirer, "Hölderlin und der deutsche Idealismus," *Idee und Gestalt* (Berlin, 1921).

² Emil Staiger, *Der Geist der Liebe und das Schicksal*, (Leipzig, 1935), 11; this was already noted by Karl Rosenkranz, *G. W. F. Hegels Leben* (Berlin, 1844), p. IX-XI, 40, 41.

³ *G.S.A.*, III, 237. See also letter from Hölderlin to Schiller, September 4, 1795, *G.S.A.* VI, 86-87.

⁴ Rosenkranz, *Hegels Leben*, 90.

the phenomenon of political and social crisis, and to comprehend the role of the world-historical personality at a time of crisis, also profoundly affected Hegel's thinking during the crucial years in his development from 1797-1800.⁵

Johann Christian Friedrich Hölderlin was born in the small town of Lauffen in 1770. His father, Heinrich Friedrich, who died in 1772, was an university-trained administrator of ecclesiastical property. His mother, Johanna Christiane *nee* Heyn, herself the daughter of a clergyman, married Bürgermeister Gock of the nearby town of Nürtingen in 1774. After the death of his stepfather in 1779, Hölderlin was brought up by his mother and grandmother – also a widow – who in their bereaved condition were particularly receptive to the gloomier tenets of popular pietism.⁶ As the orphaned son of a member of the ecclesiastical establishment, Hölderlin was eligible for financial assistance in pursuing a theological education. Still the decision of young Friedrich to study for the clergy was at least as much a response to the simple piety of his mother, for whom a position in the Church seemed the only fitting vocation for her dearest son, as it was a logical consequence of his own social origins. After spending four unhappy years at the theological preparatory schools (*niedrige Seminarien*) in Denkendorff and Maulbronn, Hölderlin arrived at the Stift in the fall of 1788. And for two more years he accepted uncritically his own pietistic legacy.⁷

The poems which Hölderlin wrote until 1790, his second year at the Stift in Tübingen – though they express a powerful enthusiasm for liberty and a profound respect for the glories of the Germanic past – not only respected but adhered to the conventions of orthodox religion. In his “Buch der Zeiten” written early in 1789, Hölderlin still based his vision of an end to human oppression and a new age of human liberty on the reconciliation achieved for man through the crucifixion of Christ.⁸ In keeping with the conventions of traditional Christian thought, he imagined that the new age which would end the sway of superstition, despotism and the courts would be not the result of popular violence, but the free gift of a good prince.⁹ Though most of the poems written by Hölderlin

⁵ See Chapter V, *post*.

⁶ For Hölderlin's social background and childhood see Wilhelm Michel, *Das Leben Friedrich Hölderlins*, (Bremen, 1940), 5-40; and Lawrence Ryan, *Friedrich Hölderlin*, (Stuttgart, 1962), 14-16.

⁷ For Hölderlin's social milieu during his early adolescence see Adolf Beck, “Aus der Umwelt des jungen Hölderlins; Stamm und Tagebucheinträge, mitgeteilt und erläutert,” *Hölderlin Jahrbuch*, Beissner and P. Kluckhohn, ed., Tübingen, 1947.

⁸ “Buch der Zeiten,” *G.S.A.*, I, 69-74.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 74.

during these years, like the "Buch der Zeiten," conformed by and large to the conventions prevalent among middle class Württemberg society, they did contain certain images which were of a highly transitional nature. Hölderlin, who was profoundly inspired by the achievement of Kepler, a fellow Swabian, believed that men, like the planets, must follow a precise course if they were to achieve perfection.¹⁰ Though Hölderlin alluded to the saints rather than to philosophers as perfect exemplars of true spiritual motion, this acceptance of a Christian convention barely concealed the radical quality of Hölderlin's substitution of a physical, almost pagan standard, for the traditional Christian view.¹¹

Equally significant was the central role of "peace" and "quiet," "*Ruhe*" and "*Stille*," in his thinking during these years. Peace and quiet, while equivalents of Christian contemplation, were never described as arising out of the reading of scripture or of inward concern with self but were almost always achieved through reflecting on the beauties of nature. It was this state of being, very close to what Rousseau described as reverie, which, Hölderlin felt, saved him from succumbing to the influence of his corrupted contemporaries and enabled him to see through the mockery of the courts and the tyrannical practices of the despots.¹² Though concern with nature was hardly something new within the Christian, and more especially within the pietistic tradition, Hölderlin had perhaps unconsciously inverted the traditional relation between nature and revelation. While the "fathers of pietism" had believed that the Scriptures contained the key whereby man could comprehend nature, Hölderlin thought that nature enabled man to comprehend Christian truth.

It was only in 1790 that Hölderlin jettisoned the Christian assumptions of his earlier poetry. Until his departure from the *Stift* in September 1793, Hölderlin steeped himself in the writings of Leibniz, Kant, Rousseau and Plato. Still, in spite of his exposure to the writings of Kant, his response to the latter's intellectual tradition was at first largely eclectic and uncritical.¹³

Following Rousseau and Kant, Hölderlin believed that if man would only consult the beauties of nature, he – retarded by centuries of despotism and superstitious religion – could find his place in the league of free spirits. Had not Rousseau based all his thinking on his faith in nature

¹⁰ "Kepler," *G.S.A.* I, 81-82.

¹¹ Human freedom and the motion of the stars are related by Aristotle in Book XII of the *Metaphysics*, 1075A 20.

¹² See especially "Die Stille," *G.S.A.* I, 42-45, and "An die Ruhe," *G.S.A.* I, 102-103.

¹³ Cf. Müller, *Hölderlin-Studien*, 61-86; Wilhelm Dilthey, *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung* (Leipzig, Berlin, 1913), 355-365.

as the only valid standard of philosophical reasoning?¹⁴ Had not Kant taught that natural beauty was the symbolic representation of moral and therefore of the highest and most sublime truth?¹⁵ And had not Plato in his *Symposium* taught that love was the medium through which man, thrown by fate into experience, could strive to achieve true wisdom?¹⁶ In poem after poem, Hölderlin derived all the highest virtues of politics and human life, freedom, friendship and beauty, from the omnipotent power of love. Before the onslaught of love, all the forces which retarded human perfectibility would yield. Led by an elite, men would join together into a free league of spirits who would overthrow tyrants and inaugurate a new age of human freedom.¹⁷

These exuberant though diffuse and eclectic poems expressed Hölderlin's uncritical enthusiasm for the French Revolution and the reform movement in Swabian society. Believing that good will would suffice to see the revolution through to a successful conclusion, Hölderlin was free from any leanings towards one faction or another. To support his easy faith that modern right would triumph over obsolescent wrong Hölderlin developed a loose poetic world-view which enabled him to heap together all available arguments in support of his optimistic faith in the inevitable victory of the just.

By 1792, however, the situation had changed. Hölderlin, by now an enthusiast of the Brissotian or the "Girondist" faction of the French revolutionaries¹⁸ and a champion of the most radical elements within his own society, realized that the success of reform in France and Europe would not occur through an easy victory of obvious principles but would be the consequence of a fierce battle between men and between ideas. In the context of the internecine political and ideological battles raging in France and throughout Europe not only traditional Christianity, but even the commonplaces of 18th century enlightened thought, appeared to impede valid reform. If thinking was to serve the forces of reform within this desperately divided Europe, the intellectual must distinguish carefully between those ideas which were in fact in accord with right thinking and those ideas which were simply residual legacies of the past. It was within this context that Hölderlin's conversion from conventional

¹⁴ Cf. Müller, *op. cit.*, 101-103.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 110-120.

¹⁶ Plato, *St. no.* 203-207.

¹⁷ *G.S.A.* I₁, 104-146; Dilthey and especially Müller were the first to distinguish the phases in Hölderlin's student poetry; my periodization differs somewhat from these scholars.

¹⁸ See letter from Hölderlin to his brother, July, 1793, *G.S.A.* VI₁, 88; and letter to Neuffer, October, 1793, *ibid.*, 95-96.

deism to pantheism took place. The materialism of Spinoza's thinking, like the materialism of the radicals in France, seemed to Hölderlin to guarantee that the older notions of obedience, servitude, and authority could not be reimposed, so to speak, under the table.

Towards the middle of his university career, early in 1791, Hölderlin read the *Jacobi-Mendelssohn Correspondence*,¹⁹ which first revealed to the public the secret pantheist views of Lessing. In one of his last writings, *The Education of Mankind*,²⁰ Lessing had argued that the Old and the New Testaments did not contain irrational truths imperceptible to reason but had merely anticipated the truths which had come to light in the history of rational inquiry. This argument for natural religion, the last of several ventures by Lessing to popularize deist views, was prompted by even more radical pantheist speculations which Lessing had been prudent enough to keep secret during his own lifetime. In the *Jacobi-Mendelssohn Correspondence*, Jacobi first exposed Lessing's secret pantheist views to the public. To any reader it became apparent that Lessing had been not a deist but a Spinozist believing in the unity and divinity of nature.²¹

The correspondence, however, exposed Hölderlin not only to Lessing's private views but also to Jacobi's argument that there was in fact no middle ground between the rigorous philosophical materialism of Spinoza and the simple faith in the irrational "given" of Revelation.²² From the first, Hölderlin accepted this alternative without hesitation. Though for a while he wavered between Christian orthodoxy and Spinozist pantheism, by 1793 he had made his choice for the latter, and henceforth used Lessing's symbol *en kai pan*²³ to express his own faith in the unity and divinity of nature.

In 1793, Hölderlin wrote several long didactic poems for the local radical political society which expressed the political and moral consequences of his own pantheist philosophy. Citations from these hymns – certainly

¹⁹ *Über die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn*, Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, ed., Breslau, 1785; Hölderlin excerpts can be found in *G.S.A.*, IV₁, 207-210. Hölderlin first read *Über die Lehre*, in February, 1791 (see letter from Hölderlin to his mother, February, 1791, in *G.S.A.* VI₁, 64.) Two years passed before Hölderlin opted for pantheism rather than orthodox Christianity or deism; this would seem to refute Rosenkranz's and Haym's view that Hölderlin was a pantheist by nature; cf. Rosenkranz, *Hegels Leben*, p. X, and Rudolf Haym, *Die Romantische Schule* (Berlin, 1870), 289-324.

²⁰ "Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts," *Lessings Werke*, 6 vol., (Stuttgart, 1869), III, 197-214.

²¹ So Schelling in a letter to Hegel, February 4, 1795, G. L. Plitt, *Aus Schellings Leben in Briefen*, 2 vol., (Leipzig, 1869), I, 76.

²² Letter from Hölderlin to his mother, February, 1791, *G.S.A.* VI₁, 63-64.

²³ *Über die Lehre*, *op. cit.*, 12; this symbol is discussed by Walter Betzendörfer, *Hölderlins Studienjahre im Tübinger Stift* (Heilbronn, 1922), 15.

the most tedious poems which Hölderlin ever wrote – appear in the autograph collection of many of his radical fellow students, surrounded by cryptographs and without mention of Hölderlin.²⁴ Though intrinsically without merit, these poems record the zenith of Hölderlin's partisanship for the French revolution and involvement with the cause of reform in his own society. Stripping his verse of any lyric quality, Hölderlin hoped to express in it the goals of the local radical club. And the way in which these poems were cited by Hölderlin's associates is strong evidence that he was to some degree successful in becoming the official poet of the local radical society.²⁵

But Hölderlin soon became aware of the irrelevance of his "political poetry." Disillusioned by the arrest and eventual execution of the Girondist leaders and by the failure of the local Estates to manage properly the military and diplomatic affairs of the Duchy, he ceased writing political poetry. Shaken out of his complacency, Hölderlin realized that the French Revolution had not achieved its sublime goal of creating a new society for free men. If such a new society was to be attained, then thought must comprehend the disparity between political and social reality and the nature of things. And after 1794, Hölderlin realized the fatuous quality of an art which did not come to grips with the entire nexus of concrete social and political conditions but escaped prematurely to portray the unity of nature.²⁶

Hölderlin's disillusionment with radical politics underlay his poem, "Griechenland"²⁷ written just before he graduated from the *Stift* at the end of 1793. Hölderlin dedicated this poem to his close friend Gottlieb Staudlin, who had been his mentor during his early student years and who had published in his literary journal many of Hölderlin's early poems. In this poem Hölderlin regretfully parted company with his radical friend who was in fact soon thereafter exiled from Württemberg as a "Jacobin."²⁸

The dominating mood in "Griechenland" is elegiac. If Staudlin and Hölderlin had only known each other in ancient Greece, they would have been able to sing together of Gods and heroes.²⁹ But Attica has fallen":³⁰

²⁴ Adolf Beck, "Aus der Umwelt des jungen Hölderlins, Stamm und Tagebucheinträge, mitgeteilt und erläutert," *Hölderlin Jahrbuch*, F. Beissner and P. Kluckhohn, ed. (Tübingen, 1947), 33-46.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 41-44.

²⁶ Some interesting comments on the novel as an *avant garde* art form can be found in Hölderlin's letter to Neuffer, July, 1793, *G.S.A.* VI, 86-87.

²⁷ *G.S.A.* I, 179-180.

²⁸ For biographical information on Staudlin see Adolf Wohlwill, *Weltbürgertum und Vaterlandsliebe der Schwaben* (Hamburg, 1875), 29, 33-35.

²⁹ *G.S.A.* I, 179, verse 10-14.

a crane stands mournfully over the marble ruins and the graves of the sons of gods are surrounded by rubble and thorns.³¹ Staudlin's love for his fellow countrymen has been in vain; for him there is no place on earth and no escape from the prison of life but death.³² Hölderlin himself is drawn to Greece and "his heart belongs to the "dead." ³³ In this poem in which he for the first time contrasted the irretrievably lost, blissful state of the Greeks and the precarious condition of the moderns, Hölderlin said farewell to his own youthful aspirations.

Hölderlin's realization that Greece, while a consummate fulfillment of human spirituality, belonged irretrievably to the past was incompatible with the fundamental assumptions of his early poetry. While writing his hymns at Tübingen, Hölderlin, believing that the victory of human freedom was imminent, maintained that "love" mediated between political and spiritual freedom. "Nature" would not only determine human politics but through "love" enable man to ascend to a higher world where he would commune "in a world of pure spirit" ³⁴ with others. Now this optimistic dream that the individual could effortlessly be both a free man and a free citizen had been dispelled by circumstance. But though Hölderlin had lost his naive faith in human progress, his pantheist vision of a society in accord with nature and freedom subsequently became an ideal the realization of which would require arduous intellectual effort. And abandoning lyric poetry, which he considered to be unsuitable for this project, Hölderlin turned, for the next four years, almost all his creative energies towards describing in his novel *Hyperion*³⁵ the course of education required of a man who was to come to grips with social and political reality.

The undertaking on which Hölderlin was engaged from 1794 to 1799 was ambitious indeed: to find a way to preserve – even to suggest means of implementing – his own pantheist political ideal in the gloomy context of unregenerate 18th century Germany. While the components of Hölderlin's solution to this problem came into literary and philosophical equipoise only in the completed novel, the three distinct versions of the work which have been preserved and which precede the novel in its completed form reveal how Hölderlin digested and evaluated the most sophisticated trends in German speculation during the nineties. The First

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 180, verse 41.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 180, verse 42-45.

³² *Ibid.*, verse 33-40.

³³ *Ibid.*, verse 56.

³⁴ So for example, *G.S.A.* I, 171, verse 105-111.

³⁵ See F. Beissner, "Entwicklungsgeschichte des *Hyperion*," in *G.S.A.* III, 296-335; cf. Franz Zinkernagel, *Die Entwicklungsgeschichte von Hölderlins Hyperion*, Strassburg, 1907.

Version,³⁶ the so called “Thalia Fragment,” published in November 1794, posed the problem, though the solution offered was abortive, immature and clumsy. In the Second Version,³⁷ “Hyperion’s Youth,” written from January to July 1795, Hölderlin came to grips with the ideas of Fichte and Schiller. By the Third Version,³⁸ written between July 1795 and May 1796, Hölderlin had reached a stage in his development sufficiently advanced so that he was able to convince Schelling that “beauty” was the paradigm for the comprehension of philosophical truth. As this idea was central to Schelling’s “Fragment for a System,” Hölderlin at this moment stood in the vanguard of German Idealist speculation.³⁹

Since 1792, Hölderlin had been working on a novel about a modern Greek reformer called Hyperion. Though this version of *Hyperion*, written in Tübingen while Hölderlin was still sanguine as to the prospects of the French Revolution, has not survived in any copy, we know from a letter written by Magenau to Neuffer, two close friends of Hölderlin, that Hölderlin was hard at work at what appeared to be a “very promising novel about a freedom-loving Greek.”⁴⁰ From the jovial tone of Magenau’s comment we can infer that *Hyperion* as originally conceived was to have been a heroic romance about a hero involved in inaugurating Greek liberty. By July 1793, when Hölderlin sent a long section from a new version of *Hyperion* – also now no longer extant – to Staudlin and Neuffer for comments, the fall and subsequent arrest of the Girondist leaders which had occurred in the spring of 1793 had already begun to shake Hölderlin’s faith in the revolutionary cause.⁴¹

Staudlin, who though an activist was inclined to dispondency – leading soon to his suicide in 1795 – was perhaps not aware how much his own disillusionment with the French revolution, immortalized in his poem “The Ideas of 1793,” had taken root in the mind of his young friend. Staudlin was in any case deeply disappointed by this version of *Hyperion*, in which he missed, “hidden passages dealing with the spirit of the times.”⁴²

Staudlin would have been even less pleased with Hölderlin’s “Fragment of *Hyperion*,” written after the latter had left the Stift in 1793, and on the recommendation of Schiller, an old friend of Staudlin, become a house tutor for the von Kalb family in Waltershausen. According to the

³⁶ *G.S.A.* III, 163-184.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 186-234.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 235-252.

³⁹ Hoffmeister, *Hölderlin und die Philosophie*, 68; Müller, *Hölderlin Studien*, 162.

⁴⁰ Letter from Magenau to Neuffer, cited in *G.S.A.* III, 296.

⁴¹ See *ante* Note 19.

⁴² *G.S.A.* III, 299.

"Preface" ⁴³ to this "Fragment," published in Schiller's *Thalia* in November, 1794, Hölderlin hoped to describe the universal road, "eccentric in its course," leading from the simplicity of youth, when man was naturally integrated into the totality of things, to the "most sublime insight" (*Bildung*), when, on a much higher level, this integration with nature had been achieved through free self-determination.

The narrative of the "Fragment," however, hardly fulfills the grandiose expectations raised by the "Preface." Describing the isolation and spiritual torments of a young poet, it is a prose elegy relating the hopeless nostalgia of the hero for his own innocence and for the "total" free culture which the ancient Greeks had enjoyed. Philosophically, the hero expresses his solipsistic isolation and alienation from his environment by insisting that he will be satisfied by nothing less than total immersion in the "Eternal All." ⁴⁴ Anything which is not "total" and "eternal" is "nothing to him." ⁴⁵ While the philosophical position in the narrative of the "Fragment" is far closer to Schiller's idealistic contrast between the "Ideal" and the "Real" than to any legitimate form of pantheism, ⁴⁶ Hölderlin himself was evidently dissatisfied with this world view, which Dilthey rightly called *panentheism* ⁴⁷ rather than *pantheism*. Through his love for a stock romantic heroine called Melita, portrayed as the incarnation of wisdom and repose, ⁴⁸ Hyperion achieves somehow a new love for the earth. ⁴⁹ In spite of his longing for communion with the Spirit of Nature, Hyperion as portrayed in the narrative of the "Fragment" is a soul-torn adolescent, dissillusioned with his environment and nostalgic for a past in which he would have been at home. His "panentheism" is really only a philosophical expression of his total disdain for the prevailing forms of life. And throughout most of the narrative he is intrinsically passive, awaiting inspiration from outside.

While Hölderlin in his Preface to the "Fragment" had insisted that self-determination played a vital role in the achievement of true insight, he did not utilize this thought in composing the narrative. It was only in 1795 and 1796, while writing the second version of Hyperion, "Hyperion's Youth," that Hölderlin was able to move towards a solution of the

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁴⁴ This certainly anticipates the dominant *motif* in Hölderlin's *Empedokles*.

⁴⁵ *G.S.A.* III, 183.

⁴⁶ "Das Ideal und das Leben," Friedrich Schiller, *Werke in drei Bänden*, H. G. Göpfert, ed. (Munich, 1966), II, 699-703.

⁴⁷ Dilthey, *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung*, 365-366.

⁴⁸ *G.S.A.* III, 162, 173.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, VI₂ 719; Hölderlin also attended Fichte's "Collegium."

problem which he had posed so well in the “Preface” and solved so poorly in the narrative of the “Fragment of Hyperion.”

After some months in Waltershausen, Hölderlin moved in November 1794 with Frau von Kalb and his charge to Jena, where he attended Fichte’s “Lectures on the Vocation of the Scholar.”⁵⁰ After his employment with the von Kalb family terminated, he stayed in Jena until May 1795, in order to continue his study of the new philosophy. Still, in spite of his enthusiasm for Fichte, whom he considered “a hero fighting for mankind,”⁵¹ Hölderlin soon doubted some of the basic assumptions of Fichte’s philosophy. Though inspired by Fichte’s courage in maintaining his faith in the ideals of the French revolution, Hölderlin was predisposed to resist Fichte’s view – so contrary to his own pantheism – that nature, far from being a valid dimension of human freedom, could not even inspire man in his quest for freedom but was simply a setting in which he could impose his will on matter.⁵²

Hölderlin’s intention in writing “Hyperion’s Youth” was, at least initially, to reconcile his own pantheism and Fichte’s ethical idealism, Nature and human freedom. Through a poetic refutation of the solipsistic elements in Fichte’s philosophy Hölderlin hoped to show that man in the course of his education could achieve not only a vision of freedom but a comprehensive understanding of the world. By opening himself up to nature and history, the free man, Hölderlin hoped to prove, would be able not only to endure the world but to mold it and himself into a comprehensive whole.⁵³

The immediate consequence of Hölderlin’s immersion in Fichte’s philosophy was a radical revision of the philosophical intent of his novel. Acknowledging the partial validity of Fichte’s voluntarist assumptions, Hölderlin insisted that man’s encounter with nature should not be characterized by “struggle” alone; man in fact required the “help of nature”⁵⁴ if he was going to achieve his goals. The encounter of nature and human freedom should not be simply an attempt to win mastery over obtuse matter but should really be conceived of as a happy dialogue in which physical nature and history concretized and reinforced patterns growing out of freedom.⁵⁵

In “Hyperion’s Youth” the hero – now no longer a gifted adolescent

⁵¹ Cited by Hegel in a letter to Schelling, January, 1795, *Briefe von und an Hegel*, J. Hoffmeister, ed., 4 vol. (Hamburg, 1962), 18; Henceforth cited as Hegel, *Briefe*.

⁵² Cf. Fritz Medicus, *Fichtes Leben*, Leipzig, 1942.

⁵³ Cf. Müller, *op. cit.*, 129.

⁵⁴ *G.S.A.* III, 202.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 204–205.

full of nostalgia for the past but a young man imbued with Fichte's principles – appeared on the scene virtually completely isolated from his fellow men and the world about him. Aware of his loneliness and inadequacy in the natural and social world, Hyperion was at first unaware of the assistance which the world was capable of bringing towards the actualization of freedom.⁵⁶ In the course of his education, Hyperion learned that he must rely on other human beings and on physical nature if he was to endure the vicissitudes of human experience. Only in fact by experiencing the beautiful in nature, man and history, could man be assured of his powers to change the world. As a creature somewhere between the gods and the animals, man, aware of his own insufficiency, sought for symbols which would reflect the divine elements in his own nature. But love did not only drive man to seek the beautiful; it also made him reach out towards his fellows and try to create with and for them a society which would express not only human freedom but also the unitary beauty of nature.⁵⁷

The first chapter of "Hyperion's Youth," which contained the teaching of Hyperion at the close of his life, was primarily a response to and a revision of Fichte's philosophy. The remaining chapters of this version, however, which related Hyperion's exposure through education to Greek culture during a corrupt and colorless age, formed an elegy in prose to the lost beauties of ancient Greece. Following closely the argument in Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters*, Greece figured as a timeless standard for social and political excellence. Almost imperceptibly, the abstract spiritual issues which underlay the plot of the "Fragment of Hyperion" vanished. Nostalgia and reverence for the forms of ancient Greek life set the tone for the narrative of "Hyperion's Youth."⁵⁸

Both Hyperion and his beloved – now called Diotima⁵⁹ – had received a pagan education which had imbued them with an intense love for ancient Greece and its poetic and religious traditions.⁶⁰ Unlike Melita, the heroine of the "Fragment," Diotima was not a lifeless *embodiment* of spiritual completeness but a *living repository* of the social grace (*i.e.*, *Sittlichkeit*) of the ancients.⁶¹ Hyperion, striving to bring about a return to the harmony and spiritual freedom of the ancients, experienced through Diotima the standard for his own acts. Diotima, who "conversed

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 199.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 201-205.

⁵⁸ See Schiller, *Werke*, II, 462-463.

⁵⁹ Like her Platonic namesake, Hölderlin's Diotima is a priestess.

⁶⁰ *G.S.A.* III, 220.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 218.

with the ancients in her dreams,"⁶² was, like the monuments of Greek civilization, an elegiac standard whereby Hölderlin was able to measure his own intent. In this quest to make existing reality conform to the standards of excellence achieved by the ancients, Hyperion was following in the footsteps of his earliest teacher, Diotima's father, who while teaching Hyperion to live in memory among the ancient Greek heroes, had himself tried desperately to bring about a revival of Greek culture even under the prevailing corrupt contemporary conditions.⁶³

While in the first chapter of "Hyperion's Youth," Hölderlin had revised Fichte's ideas without coming to grips with the main thrust of Fichte's argument, the remaining chapters verged on an almost idolatrous treatment of Greek antiquity. Though Hölderlin had come a long way from the sentimental "panentheism" which had dominated the narrative of "A Fragment of Hyperion," he was still unable to make his story conform to the basic philosophical intention of his novel. It was only through the discovery of an eternal philosophical standard, of which the Greek experience was an historical exemplification, that Hölderlin was able to mesh the basic philosophical intention of his novel with its plot. This philosophical bridge between the present and the past was found only by the time Hölderlin composed the final completed version of Hyperion in 1796. In this finished, published version of Hyperion, knowledge of nature through reverie gave the hero access to a reality which had once found its collective expression in the institutions and life of the ancient Greeks.

The first step in this direction was taken, however, some time after July 1795, when Hölderlin, who had departed from Jena in May, composed in his home town of Nürtingen the "Preface" to the Third Version of Hyperion.⁶⁴ While still in Jena – as we can see from some letters and personal jottings – Hölderlin had subjected Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* to a fundamental critique.⁶⁵ Now in the "Preface" to the Third Version of *Hyperion*, Hölderlin construed an original philosophical theory which for the first time in the history of German Idealism made "the beautiful" rather than human freedom the key to man's knowledge of the nature of things.⁶⁶

After his first reading of Fichte's *Grundlage der Wissenschaftslehre*, Hölderlin commented to Hegel in a letter written in January 1795 that

⁶² *Ibid.*, 223-224.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 208-209.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, III, 306.

⁶⁵ Cf. Müller, *op. cit.*, 120-130.

⁶⁶ See Hoffmeister, *op. cit.*, 65-68.

Fichte's emphasis on the absolute ego implied a new kind of dogmatism. If Fichte was right in maintaining that consciousness could be deduced from, but was not part of, the life of the absolute ego, the absolute ego itself was without an object for its thinking. It was in fact unthinkable and, if it existed at all, existed in a thoughtless void without meaning for the life of man.⁶⁷ Shortly after writing this letter to Hegel, Hölderlin, in a jotting certainly intended only for his own use, distinguished between "identity," which referred to the ego knowing itself – what Fichte called intellectual intuition – and true intellectual intuition, which was not knowledge of an objectless ego but of "absolute being" and as such the only possible "union of subject and object."⁶⁸ In spite of this reference to "intellectual intuition," Hölderlin at this time still believed that the road traveled from the first principle of knowledge, the ego-ego, to an absolute knowledge of the source of all reality was unending.⁶⁹ By the middle of 1795, perhaps inspired by an occasional remark on "play as the highest being,"⁷⁰ by Schiller in his *Aesthetic Letters*, Hölderlin wondered whether there might not be another way other than science and morality through which man might come to know the ultimate source of all reality. In his "Preface" to the Third Version of *Hyperion*, Hölderlin insisted that though man's quest to achieve knowledge of absolute being through science was an unending quest, absolute being was present in the world and could be perceived as "beauty."⁷¹

While writing the Third Version of *Hyperion*, Hölderlin met repeatedly with his old friend Schelling, who was at this time an enthusiastic disciple of Fichte.⁷² Sharing with Hölderlin his hunger for knowledge of objective reality and uninterested in Fichte's own epistemological concerns, he had until these conversations been most attracted to those aspects of Fichte's thought of which Hölderlin was most critical. Schelling had first been attracted to Fichte's theory of the ego by his belief that Fichte had found in the ego the *en kai pan* for which philosophy had been searching since its inception.⁷³ Though this idea was certainly expressed by Fichte on a variety of occasions, it is evident that Fichte was more

⁶⁷ Letter from Hölderlin to Hegel, January 26, 1795, *G.S.A.*, VI₁, 155; see also letter to brother, April 13, 1795, *ibid.*, 164.

⁶⁸ *G.S.A.* IV₁, 216-217; cf. Dieter Henrich, "Hölderlin über Urteil und Sein," Hölderlin-Jahrbuch, XIV, 1965-66, 73-96.

⁶⁹ Letter from Hölderlin to Schiller, September 4, 1795, *ibid.*, VI₁, 180.

⁷⁰ Schiller, *Werke*, II, 481.

⁷¹ *G.S.A.* III, 236; see also letter from Hölderlin to Immanuel Niethammer, April, 1796, *G.S.A.* VI₁, 203.

⁷² Cf. *F. W. J. Schelling, Briefe und Dokumente*, Horst Fuhrmans, ed. (Bonn, 1962), I, 57-59.

⁷³ *Schellings Werke*, M. Schröter, ed., 6 vol., (Munich, 1927). I, 109, note 1.

concerned with deriving all human acts and modes of knowledge from the self-conscious human ego than in discovering the ultimate source of objective existence.⁷⁴ While for Fichte intellectual intuition was awareness of self as a cause of knowledge and morality, for Schelling it was from the beginning knowledge of self as the absolute identity of subject and object, and as such distinguished from all other acts of the human mind.⁷⁵ Hölderlin, while agreeing with Schelling that intellectual intuition of the absolute unity of subject and object was possible, insisted that it was not the identity of the ego, but the primal identity of pure being which this intellectual intuition could perceive.⁷⁶ Intellectual intuition was not an act of knowing, akin to all other acts of knowing, but an esthetic act achieved by envisioning the ideal of beauty present in everything beautiful in the world.

By the beginning of 1796, Hölderlin had convinced Schelling in a protracted conversation in Stuttgart that both philosophy and morals could be derived from the ideal of beauty. The impact of this conception of art as the *summa organum* of philosophy on Schelling's mind was immortalized in Schelling's "Fragment for a System."⁷⁷

However fruitful Hölderlin's aesthetic theory as presented in the "Preface" to the Third Version of *Hyperion* was in charting the subsequent course of Idealist speculation, its impact on the narrative of this version was to increase the gap between the "Preface" and the narrative. For "beauty" could not exist in a void but could only be the product of an art which grew organically out of the innermost recesses of the human spirit and the human heart.⁷⁸ Though such an art had been achieved by the Greeks, modern man was impotent to create it. The role of the artist under these prevailing conditions could only be to convince men of how much they had lost. The narrative of the Third Version of *Hyperion*, in sharp contrast to its grandiose philosophical preface, was perhaps for this reason the most elegiac and naturalistic version of the novel.⁷⁹

Stripped of all illusions, Hyperion in the Third Version accepted the fact that his only chance to find meaning under the corrupt conditions of contemporary life was to come to grips with the real conditions of his society and accept them as preconditions for his own individual happi-

⁷⁴ J. G. Fichte, *Ausgewählte Werke in sechs Bänden*, F. Medicus, ed., (Leipzig, 1911, 1912), I, 204.

⁷⁵ Schelling, *Werke*, I, 251.

⁷⁶ G.S.A. IV₁, 216-217.

⁷⁷ Chapter II, 31-37.

⁷⁸ G.S.A. III, 236-252.

⁷⁹ Cf. Zinkernagel, *op. cit.*, 135-143.

ness.⁸⁰ His hunger for a larger and more fulfilling world remained totally unrequited. Friendless and unloved, he preserved, only through intense private effort, his dream of a larger and freer society which had been instilled in him through his reading of the Greeks.⁸¹

It was only in the Final Version of *Hyperion*, which Hölderlin completed in Frankfurt in 1796 (and published in two parts in 1797 and 1799), that the philosophical intent of the novel meshed with the narrative. While in the Third Version there was still a sharp cleavage between the philosophical conception of "beauty" expressed in the "Preface" and the austere realism of the narrative, in the Final Version, Hölderlin made knowledge of nature, achieved through reverie, the norm whereby Hyperion evaluated ethical, social and political circumstance.⁸²

Hölderlin had arrived in Nürtingen in May 1795, exhausted from his efforts to digest Fichte's philosophy, shaken by the rupture of his problematic friendship with Schiller and depressed by the death of the wife of his best friend, Neuffer.⁸³ And except for occasional meetings with Schelling in Stuttgart, he had written the Third Version of *Hyperion* in almost total isolation from any of his friends. It was in the far more congenial setting of Frankfurt am Main, where Hölderlin went at the beginning of 1796 to become a house tutor for the Gontard family, that he finally rewrote and completed his novel. Surrounded by avant-garde poets, philosophers and politicians – most of them, like Hölderlin himself, former students of Fichte in Jena, involved in politics, though considering themselves as part of an elite group of intellectuals – Hölderlin, in love with his employer's wife, wrote the final version of *Hyperion*.⁸⁴ Here, in Frankfurt, exposed to the daily influence of Isaac Sinclair, whom he had met in Jena and who was studying to be the chief administrator of the minute principality of Homburg auf der Hohe,⁸⁵ and other former members of the "League of Free Men,"⁸⁶ Hölderlin reached a new stage in his political development. In the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Frankfurt, Hölderlin as Hegel was to do a few years later, proposed his own personal strategy for the total reform of German society.

⁸⁰ *G.S.A.* III, 240-242.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 238-240.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 8-9.

⁸³ For Hölderlin's philosophical malaise, see letter to Hegel, November 20, 1796, *ibid.*, VI, 222; for his sorrow over the death of Neuffer's wife see letter to Neuffer, May 8, 1795, *ibid.*, 170.

⁸⁴ See Wilhelm Michel, *Das Leben Friedrich Hölderlins*, (Bremen, 1940), 170-173.

⁸⁵ Sinclair commented that Hölderlin was his "Herzensfreund *instar omnium*," in a letter to Franz Wilhelm Jung, March 26, 1795, *G.S.A.* VI, 741.

⁸⁶ Cf. Michels, *op. cit.* 127-131; for the League of Free Men in Jena, see W. Flitner, *A. L. Hülsen und der Bund der freien Männer*, Jena, 1913.

While working on his novel *Hyperion* from 1792 to 1796, Hölderlin had radically changed his conception of what the relationship between the poet and politics should be. At the inception of his project, while a student in Tübingen, Hölderlin had believed that the poet should express through his verse the aims and aspirations of those men who were actively engaged in a restoration of the rights of humanity. As he became disillusioned with the actual course of the revolution and with the prospects of reform in his own society, the relationship between poetry and action became increasingly more complex. By the time Hölderlin began to write the final version of *Hyperion* in 1796, he had reached a stage in his own political evolution in which he believed that the poet should not be a spokesman for revolution, but should rather be its prophet. The values which the poet expounded were not to be realized immediately through political action; rather, the word of the poet should prepare the way for a new society which would be capable of asserting its own more natural values on the political scene.⁸⁷ This new conception of the political role of poetry was not peripheral but central to the final version of *Hyperion*. To emphasize his new won vision that the poet should not be simply a mouthpiece of revolution, but should be the educator of his people, Hölderlin located his novel in time at just that point in his hero's development when he was getting ready to assume his role as educator. In the "Fragment" *Hyperion* was an adolescent. In "Hyperion's Youth," he was an old man recalling experiences that had happened long before. In the Final Version, on the other hand, the hero appears on the scene at just that moment when he is preparing himself for his mission as teacher by recalling past experiences.⁸⁸

In the final version of *Hyperion*, the hero, a modern Greek poet, attempts to remember and rethink the pivotal moments of his experience by writing a series of letters to his German friend, Bellamy.⁸⁹ The dramatic focus of the novel is the attempt to integrate his own pantheist faith in the completeness and wholeness of nature with the tragic course of his own destiny.⁹⁰ Driven by grief into seclusion, he tries to regain his focus by digesting to the full the meaning of his own life's course.⁹¹ The novel begins with *Hyperion* starting this process of self-therapy and ends

⁸⁷ *G.S.A.* III, 8, verse 15-17; 89, verse 20.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 7, verse 7-11.

⁸⁹ "Time" in *Hyperion* would be a fine topic for some scholar's research; Hölderlin skillfully distinguishes between the time of the action described and the time in which *Hyperion* recollects his former experiences.

⁹⁰ *G.S.A.* III, 7-9.

⁹¹ So, for example, *Hyperion* must force himself to remember his love affair with Diotima; *ibid.*, 59-61, 157.

when some degree of equipoise has been reached and Hyperion is able to see his past in harmony with his faith in the universal justice and harmony of nature. At the end of the novel, the reader is left with the feeling that now Hyperion is able to begin his mission to bring men into a relationship with nature so that through this awareness they will be worthy and capable of political and spiritual freedom.

The chief intent of *Hyperion*, however, was to show that there was no easy way for the individual, not to speak of the state or of society, to live his life in accord with the spirit of nature. The attempt by Hyperion to achieve inner tranquility through the private experience of sublime love had failed, as had his attempt to purify his people through war.⁹² By the end of the novel, Hyperion was thrown completely upon his own inner resources. Still, even at this stage, his poetic musings were not simply the acts of an individual attempting to save his own soul amidst a corrupt setting, but preparation for the far greater task of becoming an educator of his people.⁹³

Though ostensibly the novel deals with the inner life of one person, the issues raised in it indicate that the destiny of Hyperion is not played out in a unique context. Rather, Hyperion's self-development, far from being an end in itself, is presented as a phenomenon of universal import.⁹⁴ The purpose of the novel quite clearly is not to present the biography of a solitary individual, but to show the means whereby the eternal values which should inform all human acts can be preserved and taught even within a corrupt setting, so that they may once again be expressed through the voice of the poet. By making Hyperion's disillusionment with private happiness and with political activism a pivotal part of his evolution towards becoming a poet, Hölderlin emphasized that the role of the individual under the prevailing corrupt conditions was not simply to contribute through his overt acts to the cause of freedom. Rather, the role of the poet was to contribute to the education of men, by imposing upon them through song, eternal values, which if absorbed, would make them capable of freedom.⁹⁵ On the surface, this was very much the same conclusion as that which Schiller had reached at the close of his *Letters on Esthetic Education*.⁹⁶ Still, for Schiller it was the escape quality in "play" which attracted his fancy. Hölderlin, however, conceived of poetry not as an escape into the world of make-believe, but as an expression of the

⁹² *Ibid.*, 117.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 89, verse 20.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 160, verse 6-10.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 149, verse 10-14.

⁹⁶ Schiller, *Werke*, II, 519-520.

most sublime truths, which if comprehended, would constitute an ideology capable of emancipating mankind.⁹⁷

By the beginning of *Hyperion*, the hero already believed that in Nature he had found the highest norm for society and the state. Under the prevailing corrupt conditions, however, Hyperion was driven to seek total solitude in order to come to grips with his own past experience; like Rousseau, he was driven from the political arena to a "hermitage" where he would be momentarily free from the decadence of human society.⁹⁸ But Hölderlin did not mean to make his hero emulate Rousseau's narcissistic, self-indulgent vision of self, or the self-righteousness with which Rousseau dealt with the alleged malice of his friends. The significance of making the hero of the novel a hermit was not to defend solitude, but to show that only in seclusion could Hyperion come to grips with himself and prepare himself for his mission as a poet and national educator.

But Hölderlin had not spoken his last word on the value of solitude. While still in Frankfurt, he wrote in 1797 a "Plan for Empedokles,"⁹⁹ outlining a tragedy based on the life of the Sicilian philosopher who, according to legend, had thrown himself into the crater of Mount Aetna in order to reunite himself with the elements. While in Frankfurt, Hölderlin, preoccupied by his love affair and busy completing his novel had found little time to deal in depth with the issues which "Empedokles" raised. It was only after the second volume of *Hyperion* was completed that Hölderlin found time to realize this grandiose project.¹⁰⁰

In September 1798, Hölderlin's employment ended abruptly when his employer finally became annoyed by the liaison between Hölderlin and his wife.¹⁰¹ To recover from this misfortune in solitude, while remaining close enough to his mistress to visit her from time to time, Hölderlin accepted the invitation of his friend Sinclair and moved to the nearby principality of Homburg auf der Höhe.¹⁰² By November 1798, he had recovered sufficiently to begin working on his tragedy, which he entitled, "The Death of Empedokles."¹⁰³

Though Hölderlin spent from 1798 to 1800 working on his tragedy

⁹⁷ See especially letter from Hölderlin to his brother, January 1, 1799, *G.S.A.* VI₁, 306-307.

⁹⁸ The full title of *Hyperion* is in fact, *Hyperion oder Der Eremit in Griechenland*, *ibid.*, III, 1.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, IV₁, 145-148.

¹⁰⁰ See *G.S.A.* IV₁, 333.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, VI₂, 888-889.

¹⁰² See letter from Hölderlin to his mother, October 10, 1798, *ibid.*, 283-284.

¹⁰³ For the approximate date when the First Version of "Empedokles" was begun, see *ibid.*, IV₁, 333. The title, "Der Tod des Empedokles," appears only on the *Reinschrift* of the Second Version and in two letters written on June 4, 1799; *ibid.*, 321-322.

and considered his success or failure in this undertaking to be the test of his own poetic capabilities, he never completed it to his own satisfaction. The three fragmentary versions of this tragedy which have been preserved in Hölderlin's handwriting indicate that he was concerned while writing it with the question of suicide and its legitimate justification. In the process of thinking about this question, Hölderlin came to realize that only under very specific historical circumstances was suicide justified.¹⁰⁴

While writing "Empedokles," Hölderlin was in very close contact with Hegel, who during these years was concerned with the similar phenomenon of Jesus's "withdrawal from the world" and its conceivable justification. Like Hölderlin he eventually concluded that isolation and withdrawal were justified only under certain historical conditions (such as those which Jesus experienced) when involvement with the world would be "dishonorable."¹⁰⁵ But while Hölderlin's thinking during the years in which he composed his play resulted in a new methodology – which he applied only to ethics and anthropology and which affected Hegel's thinking to its core – unlike Hegel, who applied Hölderlin's new method to politics, the latter was never able to resolve for himself personally the question which most obsessed him: the incredible loneliness of the free.

¹⁰⁴ This insight was first reached in two essays written late in 1799, "Das Werden in Vergehen," *ibid.*, 282-287 and "Grund zum Empedokles," *ibid.*, 149-162.

¹⁰⁵ Hegel's "Systemfragment of 1800," in *Hegel's theologische Jugendschriften*, Herman Nohl, ed., (Tübingen, 1907), 351; not to be confused with "Das älteste Systemfragment des deutschen Idealismus," written by Schelling in 1796.

CHAPTER IV

HEGEL (1792-1800)

From his parents and upbringing, Hegel acquired a sense for the immense importance of tradition and social milieu in delineating the life of modern man. Friedrich Wilhelm Georg Hegel,¹ born like Hölderlin in 1770, was the son of an important ducal official and of a mother whose family for generations had played an important role in the Church and in the Estates. During his childhood and adolescence in Stuttgart, the capital of Württemberg, Hegel was exposed both to the extravagance of the court and to the matter-of-fact professionalism which prevailed in his home and among his father's friends and colleagues.²

From the age of ten, Hegel attended the large, sprawling and very disorganized Gymnasium Illustre in Stuttgart, where he assiduously studied not only the classics, but also the writings of such minor German "Aufklärer" as Garve, Feder, Mendelssohn, and Lessing.³ Judging from

¹ The most thoughtful study of Hegel's early writings written in English is still Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, (Boston, 1960), 30-42; neither Leonard Krieger's, *The German Idea of Freedom*, Boston, 1957 nor George Kelly's *Idealism, Politics and History*, Cambridge, 1969 deal with Hegel's early years. Provocative though inaccurate is the chapter on Hegel in Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellism*, Douglas Scott tr., (New York, 1965), 343-369. In spite of the author's familiarity with recent German Hegel scholarship, Walter Kaufmann's *Hegel, Reinterpretation, Texts and Commentary* is unanalytic and useful only to introduce Hegel to readers unfamiliar with his life or work. Though uncritical in their approach to Hegel's manuscripts, the great nineteenth century biographies are still indispensable resources of insight and source material; see especially Karl Rosenkranz, *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegels Leben*, Berlin, 1844, and Rudolf Haym, *Hegel und seine Zeit*, Berlin, 1857. For a discussion of problems of Hegel philology see *post* note 8. Theodor Haering, *Hegel, sein Wollen und sein Werk*, 2 vol., (Leipzig, 1929-1938), I, is useful; though like his mentor, Meinecke, prone to state-worship, Franz Rosenzweig's *Hegel und der Staat*, 2 vol., (Munich and Berlin, 1920), I, is brilliant and invaluable.

² For Hegel's childhood see Rosenkranz, *Hegel's Leben*, 4, and Rosenzweig, *Hegel und der Staat*, I, 11; for Hegel's father's office and social-legal status see F. Winterlin, "Landeshoheit," *Herzog Karl Eugen von Württemberg und seine Zeit*, 2 vol., Württ. Geschichts und Altertums Verein, ed., (Esslingen, 1909), I, 179, 186, 187.

³ See *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*, J. Hoffmeister, ed. henceforth cited as Hegel, *Dokumente*, (Stuttgart, 1936), 54-166, *passim*, and K. Rosenkranz, *op. cit.*, 10-15; cf. Haering, *Hegel*, I, 13-20.

his voluminous reading notes and from some short essays written while at the Gymnasium, Hegel was well aware of the power of institutions to determine social life and theological thought.⁴ Still, he was curiously uninterested in purely theological or philosophical issues at this time. And though inclined to prefer the "culture" of the Ancients to the divisive world of the moderns, he drew no practical inference from this intellectual preference. Indeed, at the close of his high school years, Hegel was an extremely studious boy more concerned with educating himself than with changing the world.⁵

In 1798, Hegel entered the *Stift* in Tübingen. Except for immersing himself in the writings of Jacobi, Mendelssohn, Lessing, and above all Rousseau, Hegel during his first three years at the *Stift* read little beyond what was expected of him by his teachers. During these years, however, he did become a partisan of the French Revolution, an active member of the local student radical society and a close friend of Schelling and Hölderlin, whose radical politics he enthusiastically shared.⁶ Unlike his friends, however, Hegel did not study the writings of Kant closely during his student years. Hölderlin and Schelling, like many other students at the *Stift*, joined reading circles to study the great philosopher and spent much of their time coming to grips with Kantian texts. Hegel, however, though he may have glanced at Kant's *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, was really familiar only with one text of the Kantian School, Fichte's *Critique of All Revelation*. And it was not Fichte, but Rousseau, the chief mentor of Hegel during his student years, who inspired Hegel to study the phenomenon of "civil religion."⁷

Like Rousseau, Hegel believed that though a civil religion, if it was to be effective in uniting the minds of the citizens of a free society, should be based on doctrines that were self-evident and extremely simple, its chief function was to enable men to act fully and virtuously as citizens of a free state. This political emphasis in Hegel's first "theological writings" contrasts sharply with the rationalistic concerns of Kant and Fichte, who were intent on discovering the reasonable core of conventional Christianity.⁸

⁴ "Rede beim Abgang vom Gymnasium," Hegel, *Dokumente*, 52-54.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 47-48; cf. Haering, I, 29-32.

⁶ See Dieter Henrich, "Leutwein über Hegel," in *Hegel-Studien*, F. Nicolini and O. Pöggeler, ed., (Bonn, 1965), III, 39-77, esp. 53-57.

⁷ For Kant studies in the *Stift* see, Walter Betzendörfer, *Hölderlins Studienjahre im Tübinger Stift*, (Heilbronn, 1922), 62.

⁸ Politics is conspicuously absent from Kant's and Fichte's theological tracts; Hegel's political concerns, on the other hand, are always apparent; see, for example, *Hegels theologische Jugenschriften*, Herman Nohl, ed. (Tübingen, 1907) 20-21. Hegel's early biographers were unable to arrange the mass of Hegel's early manuscripts, which they

In four short fragments written in 1792 and 1793, just before Hegel left the *Stift* to become a tutor for the children of a wealthy family in Bern, Hegel let loose his venom at the petty, apolitical, even inhuman quality of conventional Christian belief.⁹ At first he was concerned almost exclusively with the pernicious effect of conventional Christianity on politics. Ordinary Christian practice, according to Hegel, made excessive demands on the emotions which resulted in mass hypocrisy, a perfect setting for the unholy alliance of slavish morality and despotism. But Hegel condemned not only the perverted Christian orthodoxy of his own day, but Christianity as such, for its cosmopolitanism and lack of patriotism, attitudes possible only in an "imperfect" society.¹⁰

In the fourth, longest and most remarkable of these early fragments, Hegel attempted to relate the phenomenon of "religiosity," possible for adherents of any religion, with his own interest in what constituted a viable "civil religion."¹¹ Unlike orthodoxy, which stifled freedom by drowning human autonomy in a sea of petty regulations, "religiosity" not only enabled man to master his drives, but aroused the breadth of soul necessary for a sense of political freedom.¹² While some individual Christians, imbued with genuine religious feeling, had been both good men and good citizens, Christianity usually repressed man's political nature. A civil religion consequently not only must be compatible with, but must also foster true religiosity while inculcating a sense of political virtue.¹³ While the Greeks had experienced such a civil religion, Christianity through its rigorous discipline, its spiritual emphasis and its iconoclastic tendency had never been able to bridge the gap between individual and political freedom.¹⁴

At the conclusion of his studies at the *Stift* in Tübingen, Hegel was

already had at their disposal, in chronological order. The first philologically sound treatment of those manuscripts which survived into the twentieth century was begun by Dilthey while he was working on *Die Jugendgeschichte Hegels*, Berlin, 1906; this philological thrust was continued by Dilthey's student, Herman Nohl (in *Nohl*), by Johannes Hoffmeister, in Hegel, *Dokumente*, and by Rosenzweig. Recently in conjunction with their forthcoming *Hegels Jugendschriften*, Gisela Schüler and others working at the Hegel Archiv in Bonn have substantially refined the philological procedure. As, however, *Nohl* and Hegel, *Dokumente*, are still the only collections of Hegel's early writings, it has been necessary to use them in conjunction with the tables in G. Schüler, "Zur Chronologie von Hegels Jugendschriften," in *Hegel-Studien*, 1963, XX, 111-159; to date and arrange the texts, I have relied exclusively on Schüler, esp. *loc. cit.*, 127-133.

⁹ *Nohl*, 355-359.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 356.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 3-29.

¹² *Ibid.*, 27; see also 357-358.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 11, 19.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 22-23; see also 356-358.

a young radical committed to the cause of creating a free and politically conscious citizenry. He justified his politics, however, not through some philosophical theory, but through antirational argument that stressed the right of feeling and heart over that of the “dry” or “dead” intellect. It was only after Hegel had moved to Switzerland in October 1793 that he began to see in reason and not in feeling the key to a resurgence of freedom.¹⁵

It was during the three solitary years which he spent in Zschugg in the Canton of Bern as a tutor to the family of the wealthy patrician Steiger¹⁶ that Hegel first studied and digested the classics of German Idealism. Still believing that philosophy *per se* was not his own *métier*, he tried to apply the conclusions of Kant’s and Fichte’s philosophy in a historical and sociological study of the Christian religion. Hegel’s exposure to Kantianism, however, was extremely gradual. As late as January 1795 he wrote to Schelling that he was interested only in those texts which might be applied “generally” to human affairs and not in those which applied solely to “theoretical reason,” i.e., science or epistemology.¹⁷ By the middle of 1795 he was a devotee of Kant’s moral philosophy and believed that it “vindicated the rights of humanity.”¹⁸ Still it was only in 1796 that the Kantian concept of reason became for him the norm which could solve the problem with which he was most concerned during these years: the suitability of Christianity as a “civil religion” for a politically and spiritually free people.

Hegel’s first nine months in Switzerland coincided with the Jacobin dictatorship in France. We know from an entry in his autograph book that his fellow students believed that Hegel, though a partisan of the French Revolution, was a political moderate.¹⁹ We also know from a letter written at the close of 1794 – the first letter of any interest by Hegel which has been preserved – that he detested Robespierre and his faction.²⁰ It is therefore probable that Hegel’s short-lived *hostility* to the Roman cult of the state and the totally committed citizen stemmed at least in part from his extreme distaste for the Terror.

In the first of his “theological writings” written in Switzerland before

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 12, 14.

¹⁶ Letter from Hegel to Steiger, 1795, *Briefe von und an Hegel*, J. Hoffmeister, ed., 4 vol. (Hamburg, 1962), I, 26; henceforth cited as *Briefe*.

¹⁷ Hegel to Schelling, January 1795, *Briefe*, I, 16.

¹⁸ Hegel to Schelling, April 16, 1795, *Briefe*, I, 24.

¹⁹ Rosenkranz, *Hegels Leben*, 34; one autograph entry was *liberté raisonnée*.

²⁰ Letter from Hegel to Schelling, December 1794, *Briefe*, I, 12; To see Hegel’s early writings as in accord with French Jacobinism is the consistent flaw in Georg Lukács, *Der junge Hegel*, Berlin, 1954.

1794, Hegel, without changing the basic delineation of his problem, replaced the irrational cult of political virtue which had been his chief criterion for a "civil religion" in his earlier writings, by a new emphasis on the individual who fulfilled both his private and his public duties. Socrates rather than Coriolanus or Gustavus Adolphus now appeared to him to be the model of the good citizen. The irrationalism which had characterized his first writings was now replaced by the more conventional view that enlightenment and obscurantism, Christianity and humanism, were the forces struggling for ascendancy in the modern world.²¹ Dismissing the Roman republican experience as both superstitious and simplistic ("A Roman was not a man but only a Roman."),²² he turned his attention to contrasting the sectarianism of Jesus to the universalism of Socrates. Contrasting Jesus and Socrates, Judaism and Greek religion, Hegel charged Jesus with succumbing to the vindictive and inhuman rhetoric of the Hebraic tradition and to the authoritarianism of its political ideas. Unlike Socrates, who had tried to teach his fellow citizens, including statesmen, generals and poets, to think better about their own affairs, Jesus, in keeping with the Messianic theocratic traditions of Jewry, had claimed an exclusive role in the lives of his extremely undistinguished "disciples."²³ Jesus's teachings were suited moreover only to the moral edification of private persons without any political responsibilities whatsoever. Jesus's insistence on poverty, charity and pacifism was suited only to a small sect of committed individuals and not to society at large.²⁴ The stringency of Christian doctrine could only promote hypocrisy and guilt and not a civil spirit committed to the preservation of the commonwealth.²⁵

But Hegel's extreme antipathy to the person of Jesus was as shortlived as his distaste for Roman civic patriotism. By the middle of 1794, Hegel had abandoned his brief flirtation with Socratic humanism and returned to his main project of investigating whether Christianity was capable of evolving into a civil religion for a free republic. In two short fragmentary essays,²⁶ Hegel attempted to relate political freedom and civil "virtue" to morality. The emphasis on dogma and mystery in Christian orthodoxy now appeared to Hegel to be both a cause and a consequence of unfree-

²¹ *Nohl*, 31-35, 359.

²² *Ibid.*, 31.

²³ *Ibid.*, 30-35, 41.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 41, 44.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 43-44.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 48-71.

dom. Political freedom and morality, on the other hand, went hand in hand.

It was because men were unfree that they needed to "believe" that immortality, the ultimate vindication of the just, and forgiveness of sins had been won for them by the crucifixion and the resurrection of an alien God. Depraved by circumstance, men for millenia had needed to believe that their dignity and salvation were assured by the acts of another being.²⁷ And in order to "believe" in the miracles and dogmas of Christianity men had abdicated the use of their own reason and had made themselves accept absurdities as truth.²⁸

Hegel gave a new dimension to this rather conventional argument about the interplay of despotism and superstition. Slaves, subservient to their master, were not only prone to believe in dogmas and accept historical absurdities as true; they were also incapable of grasping moral truths. Responding here to Kant for the first time, Hegel modeled his conception of citizenship on Kant's idea of human freedom. While in his earlier writings political freedom was an end in itself requiring no further justification, Hegel now believed that patriotism was the ultimate realization of freedom. The "free citizen in a republic" who put all his effort into working for his country was working for "his own idea, his own duty."²⁹

But morality, like civil freedom, was characterized by "self-determination through freedom" and based on the principle that "virtue was its own reward."³⁰ Perhaps Christianity reinterpreted and stripped of its historical and dogmatic emphasis might serve to popularize morality and teach the individual, caught up in his own selfish pursuits, to be a free citizen. The emergence of Christianity as a world religion necessarily required the betrayal of the ethical teachings of Jesus. The role of historical Christianity amidst the decay of political and cultural life during the late Roman Empire was not to moralize politics or even human behavior, but to be the world view for an enslaved people who transposed their freedom and dignity into another world. It was only with the slow revival of individual freedom, self-respect and self-determination that the whole nexus of conditions which had served as the setting for the emergence of historical Christianity began to disappear.³¹ Historic Christianity had perverted the moral fervor of the teachings of Jesus. Ordinary

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 68-71.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 51.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 70.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 50.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 70-71, 364-365.

Christians worshipped the man instead of seeing in the Christ the incarnation of virtue or a “personified ideal.”³² Still latent in Christianity was its potential to be a religion based on morals. Of all the great religions, Christianity alone satisfied the human propensity for worshipping in concrete form the highest aspirations and the most sublime moral insights of man.³³ For, Hegel insisted, a “system of religion” always was affected by the “times and constitution.” In the past, Christianity had emphasized humility and human impotence. A new Christianity was, however, possible which would stress “self-sufficient dignity.”³⁴

The growing importance of the individual in civil society during the modern period was the basis for Hegel’s belief that moral teaching could enable men to be free citizens of a republic. Modern man concerned with things of this world was once again beginning to enjoy his humanity. The moderns, though inculcated with conventional Christian thought and living under despotic regimes, were capable of responding to moral teaching in a way in which the Jews and the Romans at the time of Jesus were not. Men were once again capable of ideas and conscious of the dignity of their own human nature. Though experience still taught that men were corrupted, men no longer believed that human nature as such was corrupted. And the concern of the moderns with private property and with beautifying own immediate environment – which had made men turn from the mythical world of Christianity to more eudaimonistic attitudes – might in turn be replaced by a new concern with the higher values of morals.³⁵

By the close of 1794, Hegel had read Kant’s *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*.³⁶ Indeed it was this text and Fichte’s *Critique of all Revelation*, which he had already read in Tübingen, which probably prompted him to abandon his totally critical stance towards Christianity. Perhaps Christianity did contain, after all, the teachings of pure morality in a form accessible to ordinary men. It was, however, only during 1795

³² *Ibid.*, 67.

³³ *Ibid.*, 56.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 71.

³⁵ *Ibid.*; Georg Lukács in *Der Junge Hegel* argues that Hegel during his Swiss years agreed with the Jacobins that the state must on occasion attack private property and that it was only in 1797–1800 that Hegel made his peace with bourgeois society (see Lukács, *op. cit.* esp. 74–76); Lukács’s argument is based almost entirely on two texts in Rosenkranz, *op. cit.*, 525, 532, which unlike the texts discussed above seem to be excerpts from Hegel’s reading (especially the second, which is written in French, a language which Hegel on no other occasion used to convey his own ideas). Hegel’s own writings, on the other hand, strongly suggest that he consistently believed that civil society was the basis both of the real and of the ideal state.

³⁶ See letter from Hegel to Schelling, December 1794, *Briefe*, I, 12.

that Hegel, inspired by letters from Schelling and Hölderlin, immersed himself in the writings of Kant, Fichte and Schiller.

Hegel's first letter to Schelling, written in December 1794, indicates that he believed that his friend was still engaged in Biblical criticism.³⁷ In January 1795 Hegel was aroused from his complacency by the startling news that his friend had abandoned his scholarly ventures and was now completely concerned with participating in the philosophical revolution which had been begun by Fichte. Suggesting that Hegel read Fichte's *Grundlage zur gesamten Wissenschaftslehre*, Schelling heaped his scorn on those who tried to justify "so-called natural religion" or even belief in a "personal, individual God" on Kantian grounds.³⁸ At the end of January, this first shock from the outside world was followed by another, a letter from his closest friend, Hölderlin. In raptures about Fichte's new philosophy, which he was experiencing at firsthand in Jena, Hölderlin suggested that Hegel read not only Fichte's *Grundlage*, but also his *Vocation of a Scholar*.³⁹ Hegel's first response was to write Schelling that though he had resumed his study of Kant in search of those conclusions which had practical implications, he was uninterested in the purely theoretical aspect of the new philosophy.⁴⁰ By the end of August, however, Hegel had read not only Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* and Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters*, but Fichte's *Grundlage* and Schelling's first two speculative writings ("On the Possibility for a Form for Philosophy" and *On the Ego*) as well.⁴¹

Hegel, responding to the challenge of Schelling's new philosophy, jettisoned his belief in an individual, personal God. Agreeing with Schelling that "God" was, if anything, an impediment to moral growth, which depended on awareness of self-determination, he modified his proposal for a new moral religion.⁴² In his subsequent writings, only the moral teachings of Jesus and not the divinity of Christ were salvaged from the ruins of Christianity. Inspired by his correspondence with his old friends and his readings, Hegel also modified his conception of morality. In his early Swiss writings, sensing a relation between freedom and morals, Hegel had based his ethics on the conventional assumption that virtue was its own reward.⁴³ He had, moreover, believed that the victory of a moral point

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

³⁸ Schelling to Hegel, January 1795, *Briefe*, I, 14, 15.

³⁹ Hölderlin to Hegel, January 26, 1795, *Briefe*, I, 18, 19.

⁴⁰ Hegel to Schelling, January 1795, *Briefe*, I, 16.

⁴¹ Hegel to Schelling, April 16, 1795, *Briefe*, I, 24-25, and August 30, 1795, *ibid.*, 29-33.

⁴² Hegel to Schelling, January 1795, *Briefe*, I, 17.

⁴³ *Nohl*, 50.

of view was assured by a process of enlightenment, which was in fact taking place.⁴⁴ Responding to the arguments of his friends, Hegel now realized that morality should be based on Kant's notion of freedom, and that self-determination through freedom was not a description of morality, but its source.

Still, though shaken out of his complacency to new study and to a new awareness of the relevance of the new philosophy to his own concerns, Hegel, even in 1795, was politely critical of the philosophic assumptions of Fichte and Schelling. Ostensibly, Hegel differed from Schelling only in his choice of the means by which he hoped to popularize Kant's philosophy. Schelling maintained that if Kantianism was to be accepted by the masses, its philosophical premises, which Kant himself had concealed, must be made explicit.⁴⁵ This was, we remember, one of Schelling's chief goals in writing "On the Possibility for a Form for Philosophy" and *On the Ego*. Hegel, on the other hand, while congratulating Schelling on his stupendous philosophical achievements, charged that the philosophy of the ego was an esoteric discipline. The way to popularize Kant's philosophy was to apply his ideas to politics and religion.⁴⁶

The new philosophy of Kant vindicated the dignity of man. As these ideas became public knowledge, men would not only demand their rights but would make use of them. Shaken out of their complacency by such notions as "fatherland" and "constitution," men would become accustomed to thinking not in terms of "what is," but in terms of "what ought to be." The chief impediment to human progress was despotism and its handmaid, religion, which by convincing men that they were incapable of any good made them willing cogs in a machine.⁴⁷ And while even the "vulgar Kantians" inadvertently spread "ideas" among the populace, only a critique of established religion from a Kantian perspective could reveal its pernicious political and philosophical implications.⁴⁸

But Hegel did not limit himself to defending his own concern with religion on prudential grounds alone. While paying homage to Schelling's acumen, throughout 1795 he was extremely suspicious of Fichte's and Schelling's theory of the ego. Even before reading Fichte's *Grundlage*, Hegel was suspicious of the drift of his thinking. Put on the defensive by the enthusiasm with which Schelling had abandoned his theological studies in favor of original philosophical speculations, Hegel charged, in

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 66-67.

⁴⁵ Schelling to Hegel, January 1795, *Briefe*, I, 14.

⁴⁶ Hegel to Schelling, April 16, 1795, *Briefe*, I, 24.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Hegel to Schelling, January 1795, *Ibid.*, 16-18.

a letter to Schelling of January 1795, that Fichte himself was largely responsible for the emergency of vulgar Kantianism by making ethics depend on rational theology in his first book, *The Critique of Revelation*.⁴⁹

By the end of August 1795, Hegel, perhaps inspired by Hölderlin's argument that Fichte's new philosophy was "dogmatic,"⁵⁰ levelled similar charges against the speculations of Schelling himself in what appears to be an innocuous comment on a paragraph of *On the Ego*. Substance, Hegel argued, did not pertain to the absolute ego, but only to the empirical ego. And indivisibility did not pertain to the empirical ego, but only to the absolute ego. Translated from the terminology of German Idealism, Hegel was, in fact, claiming that the absolute ego had no "reality," and that the empirical ego, which did have reality, had no comprehensive unity.⁵¹ While certainly agreeing with Schelling that "freedom was the beginning and end of philosophy,"⁵² Hegel, in 1795, did not believe that political and moral freedom could be deduced from the sovereign freedom of the ego intuiting itself. According to Hegel the true realization of human autonomy was to be found not in speculation, but in the acts of a free citizen of a republic. The life of a citizen engaged in civic pursuits was both self-determined and completely integrated. His goals were not external to him, i.e., ideals, but stemmed from his own freedom, i.e., ideas. Realizing his goals through his own work, unlike the Christian mystic he was not impeded by his senses or by the recalcitrance of objective reality.⁵³

Hegel's belief that political "virtue" was the ultimate vindication of moral freedom was the implied premise of his next major effort, a critique of Christianity entitled "On the Positivity of the Christian Religion," written in 1796.⁵⁴ As, however, such "virtue" was not apparent among his fellow citizens, Hegel tended to base his trust that political freedom would eventually be achieved on his faith that pure Kantianism would free men from their mental chains and make them capable of political liberty. For while the ancients, enjoying true republican citizenship, had created a religion in accord with freedom, the acquisition of freedom

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁵⁰ Hölderlin to Hegel, January 26, 1795, *Hölderlin-Grosse Stuttgarter Ausgabe*, F. Beissner, ed., 6 vol., (Stuttgart, 1944-62), VI, 155; henceforth cited as G.S.A.

⁵¹ Hegel to Schelling, August 30, 1795, *Briefe*, I, 32.

⁵² Letter from Schelling to Hegel, February 4, 1795, *Briefe*, I, 22, and *Schellings Werke*, M. Schröter, ed. (Munich, 1927), I, 101.

⁵³ *Nohl*, 366.

⁵⁴ *Nohl*, 152-239, translated by T. M. Knox in *Hegel, On Christianity, Early Theological Writings*, New York, 1961 (Harper Torchbooks) 67-167. As Knox inserts *Nohl's* pagination in his text, I shall continue to cite *Nohl*, which contains much material not included in Knox.

by the moderns living under despotic conditions was retarded by Christianity, which from its beginnings had developed in response to political servitude. If men were to become aware of their rights, they must be freed from the yoke of Christianity through an exposé which not only revealed its servile premises but indicated through the critique itself the proper relationship among reason, common sense and the imagination which had been made manifest in Kant's philosophy.⁵⁵

Hegel based his hope that modern man would respond to the philosophical morality of Kant on the growing importance of the natural law and natural rights in European society. And in the longest section of "On the Positivity of the Christian Religion", Hegel appealed to governments to rule in accord with the natural law, and to subjects to defend their inalienable right to liberty of conscience and moral self-determination.⁵⁶ The state's valid domain was to insure the rights of individuals.⁵⁷ Leaving the question unresolved whether the social contract had its origin in an actual "compact between all and all," or whether it was a consequence of the subjection of the weak by the strong, Hegel insisted that men in either case could not irrevocably blind their conscience.⁵⁸ Though the state had to insure the right of men to follow whatever religion they chose and even to subject themselves freely to the discipline of some sect, Hegel clearly indicated that such an alienation could be only provisional, for it implied a sacrifice not only of freedom but of reason, the divine element in man. Through religious tolerance, which alone was in accord with the natural law, men would once again become accessible to moral argument.⁵⁹

Still, while for Kant the sense of autonomy of moral man was an "end in itself" ⁶⁰ and his own chief concern, Hegel persisted in maintaining that moral freedom was either the consequence or the precondition of political virtue. So after exhausting in the same passage his appeal for liberty of conscience, Hegel suddenly abandoned this legalistic mode of argument and exposed the nexus between despotism and revealed religion. For despots it was convenient to have subjects divested of their freedom, humanity and reason. By stripping men of their inalienable autonomy, religion prepared them to be fitting slaves of a prince who mani-

⁵⁵ Nohl, 210-213.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 173-208.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 173-174.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 191-193.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 211-213.

⁶⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Werke in sechs Bänden*, W. Weischedel, ed., (Wiesbaden, 1956-1964), IV, 60.

pulated them to his own ends. In orthodox religion the right relationship among reason, common sense and the imagination was turned on its head. Instead of reason being the sovereign element in consciousness, men were brainwashed into believing that they must sacrifice their reason and accept as true, doctrines which only the imagination and not common sense could conceivably accept. By accustoming themselves to abdicating their reason, men had become cogs within the machine of the absolutist state.⁶¹ But Kant had proven that moral reason was indeed sovereign over all other modes of consciousness, something which the Greeks had known instinctively. Through awareness of moral freedom, men would in the course of time shake off the last vestiges of Christianity and create a new religion which, like that of the ancients, would reflect the autonomy of man.⁶²

In the remainder of "On the Positivity of the Christian Religion" Hegel continued his demonstration that Christianity was not a moral religion for free men, but a "revealed" religion for slaves. After discussing the impact of the servile conditions prevalent in Judaea during the advent of Christianity, he presented the rise of Christianity as a world religion as a consequence of the decline of Roman republicanism. Here, even more clearly than before, both Hegel's arguments and his final summations revealed the political pathos underlying his philosophical "Kantianism."

The source of all subsequent perversions of Christianity was already latent in Jesus's conception of self. Though hostile to the obsequiously legalistic attitude of the Jews towards him, he tended to see his own moral message not as a consequence of his own freedom, but as a personal revelation to him from God. Accustomed as a Jew to conceiving of the law as revealed, Jesus naturally thought of his own new dispensation as similarly revealed. And to reach other Jews, accustomed to thinking in this way, Jesus was driven both to magnify his own importance as the recipient of revelation and to appeal to the Jewish messianic tradition.⁶³ The Jewish trust in the coming of a Messiah was, according to Hegel, strong only when the Jews did not believe that they would be able to free themselves from the foreign yoke of the Romans through their own initiative.⁶⁴ The moral content of Jesus's teachings was consequently undermined from the beginning by the servile circumstances which surrounded its inception.

This emphasis on the historical person of Jesus, which was eventually

⁶¹ *Nohl*, 205-207.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 211-213.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 158-160.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 224-225.

to subvert completely Jesus's original moral intention, was exacerbated by his disciples. Unaccustomed to political freedom and devoid of any "originality," they preserved Jesus's teachings out of the love and respect which they had for the teacher himself. Finding it easier to worship the man than to participate in his moral insight, they subsumed morality to faith in the significance of the historical person of Jesus. His miracles and the ceremonies which evolved in the course of time soon became more important to the early Christians than the moral teachings of Jesus himself.⁶⁵

As Christianity evolved into a sect, consisting largely of lowly men without any political responsibilities, many customs and practices evolved which were suitable only for such a voluntary association. The moral teachings of Jesus were socialized at this time in a form suitable only for a small association and not for a state. As Christianity became an established religion, this ethical component in Christianity, which was far too stringent for society at large, ceased to be normative for human affairs and became imaginary social conditions for the world beyond death. What was important in this world was faith in the historical person of Jesus, in the mysteries which he and his saints had performed, and in the dogmas and rituals of the existing Church.⁶⁶

How did Christianity, which had emerged as an apolitical sect within a subject people, manage to impose itself on the Romans, who for centuries had enjoyed political freedom? Dismissing out of hand the argument that Christianity was intrinsically superior to paganism by alluding to the superior virtue of the Roman people, Hegel concluded that the emergence of Christianity was possible only after a "revolution in consciousness" had already occurred. The Roman citizen during the Republic was entire unto himself. The state for which he worked was the idea to which he totally committed himself. Before some significant free action, the free citizen might consult the gods. After a victory he might offer thanks to them. Living a full life, he had little need of a religion to satisfy his spiritual needs. Roman paganism, which made few demands on the liberty or intellect of republicans, was, however, completely incompatible with the social and political conditions which prevailed after the end of the Roman Republic. Roman religion had been based on the civil freedom which had prevailed during the Republic. It was only after the citizens had made themselves clients of an oligarchy and later subjects of a single master that the poverty of their religion became apparent. Without any

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 160-169, 177.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 166-169, 178.

rights or responsibilities except that of their own property, they projected their dream of freedom into another world.⁶⁷

In a situation characterized by immense differences in wealth and social status, the egalitarianism of Christianity enabled the Roman subject to believe that he enjoyed equality in another world. When Christianity became the state religion of the empire, the emperors used the subservience imposed by Christianity for their own ends. All freedom now disappeared from the world, and the metaphysical obsession of late Roman Christianity offered a telling witness against the utter servility of the age, as autonomy and freedom became attributes of God alone.⁶⁸

In "On the Positivity of the Christian Religion," Hegel used Kantian ideas to express and confirm his own commitment to republican virtue. Indeed, his Kantianism was in the first instance a philosophical expression of, and a norm for, his politics. His politics did not derive from his philosophical assumptions but was based on his nostalgia for ancient freedom and his appreciation of the cult of citizenship prevalent in France during the nineties. Still, as a member of the ruling class of his own backward society, Hegel neither anticipated nor desired a violent German revolution. Sharing with Hölderlin and Schelling a profound faith in the possibility of a revolution in consciousness under the aegis of the new philosophy, Hegel hoped that social evolution and political reform would supply the motor force for a revolution from above.⁶⁹

At the close of 1796, when Hegel moved from Bern to Frankfurt am Main, his politics was based on the hope that the European states were evolving towards freedom. The material base for his "Kantianism" in "On the Positivity of the Christian Religion" was bourgeois society, and he believed at this time that the course of European history was conducive to the reassertion of human freedom. For his early philosophical thought was uniquely dependent on his politics. Whatever intrinsic interest Hegel's so-called "early theological writings" still have arises out of his insight into the relationship between the exuberant political liberty enjoyed by the ancients and the theories of German Idealism.⁷⁰ For Hegel in 1796, the political counterpart to the autonomy of moral man was not, as Kant believed, any state operating in accord with the natural law, but was the autonomy of the free citizen committed to the actualization of his liberty in political practice. As a pendant to Hegel's republicanism, his Kantianism did not survive the crisis in his own thought.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 220-223, 226.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 225-228.

⁶⁹ Cf. Rosenzweig, *op. cit.* I, 38-63, *passim*.

⁷⁰ *Nohl*, 365.

When Hegel arrived in Frankfurt at the beginning of 1797, his politics were based on the hope that the European states, inspired and aided by the French Revolution, were evolving organically towards freedom. This faith found its clearest expression in two political writings which he composed shortly after his arrival.

In his preface and notes to his translation of Jean Jacques Cart's *Secret Letters on the Former Legal Relationship between the Pays de Vaud and the City of Bern*, published in 1798,⁷¹ and in his own "On the Recent Domestic Affairs of Württemberg" (not published, on the advice of some of his radical associates),⁷² Hegel affirmed his faith in the ability of existing societies to reform themselves without abrupt change or violence.⁷³ The sole purpose of his translation of Cart's *Letters* was to arouse sympathy for the citizens of the Pay de Vaud, a French-speaking territory subject to Bern, which had been denied their "good old law" by their German-speaking masters.⁷⁴

In "On the Recent Domestic Affairs of Württemberg," Hegel appealed to the altruism of his fellow Swabians and suggested that those who had privileges which were opposed to the common good should freely and courageously give them up.⁷⁵ Hegel wrote this fragment in order to hasten the domestic reforms which were being attempted by the newly convoked Württemberg Estates. Like many of his countrymen, he believed that the French government was sympathetic to the reform movement in the Estates.⁷⁶ After it had become obvious that the French were interested in the Estates only as a pressure group against the Duke and wished to maintain Ducal supremacy in an area which they were about to occupy, Hegel, upon the advice of some radical friends, decided not to publish this tract.⁷⁷

As late as 1798, Hegel identified himself with the pro-French Reform Party in the Estates, led by Georgi, Abel and Baz, and supported by the radical society in Stuttgart led by Hölderlin's close friend Landauer.⁷⁸ It was only in a "Fragment" on the German Constitution, written at the

⁷¹ Hegel, *Dokumente*, 247-257.

⁷² Rosenkranz, *op. cit.* 91-94, Haym, *op. cit.* 67, 483-485.

⁷³ Rosenkranz, *op. cit.* 93.

⁷⁴ Hegel, *Dokumente*, 247-248.

⁷⁵ Rosenkranz, *op. cit.* 93.

⁷⁶ Erwin Hölzle, *Das alte Recht und die Revolution* (Munich and Berlin, 1931), 171-179, 181-184; Jacques Droz, *L'Allemagne et la Révolution Française* (Paris, 1949), 122-126, esp. 125, 126.

⁷⁷ Letter from Hegel's friend (anonymous) to Hegel, August 7, 1798, cited in Rosenkranz, *op. cit.* 91; cf. Rosenzweig, *op. cit.*, I, 62. For the duplicity of French diplomacy towards the radical leaders in the Württemberg Estates, see Hölzle, *op. cit.* 239-240, and Droz, *op. cit.* 130.

⁷⁸ Hölzle, *op. cit.* 212-240.

beginning of 1799⁷⁹ after the negotiations at the Congress of Rastadt had revealed the duplicity of the French and the unpatriotic, self-interested and petty diplomacy of the radical party in the Estates, that Hegel broke once and for all with the Swabian Reform Party.⁸⁰ This "Fragment" of 1799 marked the nadir of Hegel's disillusionment with his own earlier republican politics. Though aware that the Swabian and Southwestern reform movement had failed, he was still at this time unable to conceive of a meaningful alternative.⁸¹ It was only at the end of 1799 that Hegel achieved the decisive insight for his entire subsequent development that a new philosophy might be a key for both the comprehension and the total transformation of German society.

In a "Preface" for an essay on the German Constitution, written late in 1799,⁸² Hegel first asserted that only a new philosophy could come to grips with the crisis of German society. Disillusioned with the capability of the leaders of German reform and with the good will of the French government, Hegel insisted that philosophy must develop a new strategy for a total transformation of the German State such that it would be able to play its rightful role among the European nations. In this "Preface" Hegel expressed his awareness that German political theory as it had evolved since the Middle Ages was fundamentally unable to come to grips with the crises of this revolutionary period. Only if the mind comprehended existing society as a single whole, containing within itself the seeds of its own transformation, could radical demands for change be more than ineffectual wishful thinking. Philosophy was now in a position, Hegel believed, to comprehend what to common sense was pure meaninglessness. This philosophical interpretation of reality revealed not only the rationality of the existing order but also the obsolescent quality of the prevailing political and legal forms. It was, in fact, only when this obsolescence had been both exposed and comprehended that a totally new society could be created which would realize the trends which were latent in the contradictions which characterized the old order.⁸³ This new plateau of insight, which was the breeding ground for Hegel's entire future philosophical development, was, however, a consequence

⁷⁹ Hegel, *Dokumente*, 282-288.

⁸⁰ Hölzle, *op. cit.* 240-256; cf. Hermann Huffer, *Der rastätter Congress und die zweite Coalition*, 2 vol., (Bonn, 1878), II, 192-233.

⁸¹ Hegel, *Dokumente*, 283.

⁸² In Rosenkranz, *op. cit.* 88-90, cf. Rosenzweig, *op. cit.*, I, 92-98.

⁸³ *Ibid.*; this explication of the "Preface" cited in full by Rosenkranz differs decisively from Rosenzweig's paraphrase, *op. cit.* 92-98, which seems to me to distort the passage beyond recognition in the interest of reconciling Hegel and the "State."

not only of Hegel's disillusionment with Swabian and Imperial Reform, but also of a fundamental revision of his philosophical ideas. This *crise de conscience* can be comprehended only within the context of the intellectual friendship between Hölderlin and Hegel during these crucial years in the latter's intellectual development.

CHAPTER V

HOLDERLIN AND HEGEL (1797 - 1800)

The bravado of Hegel's Kantianism in "On the Positivity of the Christian Religion" concealed his true state of mind during his last year in Switzerland. After three lonely years of isolation from his friends, Hegel, now twenty-six years old, was deeply depressed, aware that as yet he had achieved nothing of consequence.¹ The Canton of Bern, which, although boasting a republican form of government, was in fact ruled by a small oligarchy, also grated on his nerves.² His energies flagging, Hegel turned in desperation to Hölderlin and Schelling and asked them to seek employment in his behalf.³

After Hölderlin had found him a position in Frankfurt, Hegel replied to his closest friend with a long poem entitled "Eleusis."⁴ The content of this poem revealed Hegel's hope that he could renew his flagging enthusiasm in his youthful ideals by associating with Hölderlin, whom he remembered as an uncompromising foe of the establishment. The friend whom he found in Frankfurt was, however, no longer the adolescent radical whom he had known in Tübingen, but the mature author of the last version of *Hyperion*. In almost daily association with Hölderlin, the most concrete and "existential" of the German Idealists, Hegel was unable

¹ "Sweiz, über drei Jahre, kam in sich gekehrt zurück, nur im traulichen Zirkel fidel," a jotting by Hegel's sister, Christiane, in *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*, J. Hoffmeister, ed. (Stuttgart, 1936), 394; see also letter from Schelling to Hegel, June 20, 1796, which tries to shake Hegel out of his "Niedergeschlagenheit"; *Briefe von und an Hegel*, J. Hoffmeister ed., 4 vol. (Hamburg, 1962), I, 37; henceforth cited as Hegel, *Briefe*.

² Hegel's distaste for the Bern oligarchy was already evident in 1795; see letter from Hegel to Schelling, April 16, 1795, in Hegel *Briefe*, I, 37; cf. his "Vertraulichen Briefen," Hegel, *Dokumente*, 247-257, which, though written in Frankfurt, are based largely on his experience in Bern.

³ See letter from Schelling to Hegel, June 20, 1796, Hegel, *Briefe* I, 37; and the correspondence between Hegel and Hölderlin concerning Hegel's new position from August to November, 1796, Hegel, *Briefe*, I, 38-45.

⁴ Hegel, *Briefe*, I, 38-40; cf. Theodor L. Haering, *Hegel, sein Wollen und sein Werk*, (Leipzig, Berlin, 1929-1938), I, 291-292.

to maintain the precarious balance between the cult of political virtue and the abstract ethical idealism which had characterized his Swiss writings.⁵

Almost immediately after his arrival, his reasoning, which until 1797 had been extremely abstract and rigid, became mobile and fluid, even ponderous and opaque.⁶ The straightforward sequence of reason, Kantian morality and political freedom which had commanded his earlier thinking⁷ yielded to thought-patterns which were far more intricate and complex. The cult of political virtue, which had been in the forefront of his Swiss theological writings, disappeared now from his theological and philosophical speculations.⁸ And Kantian morality, which had been accepted uncritically in his earlier writings, was now put under close scrutiny.⁹

At first, Hegel distinguished between morality, as a conscious expression of human freedom explicitly deduced from the "practical will," and the same morality seen as a body of rules which must be obeyed out of duty. What Kant had joined, Hegel split asunder. Kant's practical philosophy was an outgrowth of freedom, but his ethics taken as instances of a divine command was part of human bondage. The same moral rule could consequently be seen in two different ways: as an outgrowth of human freedom and as a rule to which men, subject to their passions and instincts, must subject themselves. Following closely the argument in Schelling's *Philosophical Letters*, Hegel argued that any concession to reality was fatal to this type of human freedom. As, however, freedom could be found only in those aspects of morality which were totally detached from the obtuseness of human experience, the only realization which "practical reasons" *per se* could reach was the moral will itself.

But this acceptance of Schelling's speculations was only apparent. For while unconscious obedience to the plurality of moral laws implied dependence on the "object", awareness of freedom – the opposite pole to

⁵ When Karl, Hölderlin's half-brother, visited Frankfurt in April, 1797, he witnessed an intense philosophical debate between Hölderlin and Hegel, *Hölderlin, Grosse Stuttgarter Ausgabe*, F. Beissner, ed., 6 vol. (Stuttgart, 1944-1962), VI₂, 833; see also letter from Hölderlin to Neuffer, February 16, 1797, G.S.A. VI₁, 236.

⁶ Cf. Franz Rosenzweig, *Hegel und der Staat*, 2 vol. (Munich and Berlin, 1920), I, 74 ff.

⁷ The old sequence is summarized in *Hegels theologische, Jugendschriften*, Herman Nohl, ed. (Tübingen, 1907), 211-213; henceforth cited as *Nohl*.

⁸ The last mention of civil patriotism is the allusion to the "great citizen who has his object outside of himself and can show it and present it," written before July 1797, in a short jotting, *Nohl*, 371; for the chronology of Hegel's early writings see *ante*, Chapter 4, note 8.

⁹ The first explicit critique of Kant was written in August, 1798; K. Rosenkranz, *G. W. F. Hegels Leben* (Berlin, 1844), 87ff; implicit criticism is contained in the fragments written between June and September 1797 and discussed immediately below.

this dependence on the "object" – was the most extreme form of "subjectivity" and implied a flight from reality. Hegel, who it appears had recently enjoyed his first sexual experience, believed that human love somehow revealed the mean between subject and object, between freedom and nature.¹⁰ The spiritual counterpart to the phenomenon of physical love was a religion whose God was both subject and object and who united freedom and nature. Instead, however, of turning his attention immediately towards positing the principles of such a new religion, which would bridge the gap between human freedom and objective reality, Hegel reverted once again to the question which had occupied most of his time in Switzerland, the relationship between Judaism and Christianity.¹¹ In the context of Hegel's new vision, however, the polarity between Christianity and Judaism implied a contrast between Christianity and Kantianism, between the integrity of true freedom and the servility which obeyed a plurality of moral rules.¹² And Hegel now concerned himself almost exclusively with the different conceptions of the deity which prevailed under the old and the new dispensation.

According to Hegel, the God of the Jews was from the beginning an unnatural object, an inhuman tyrant of nature and man. Already Noah had responded to the trauma of the flood by envisioning a God who would protect him from the ravages of nature. By Abraham this object was modified into a God who would guarantee his and his progeny's safety. Neither Abraham nor Noah let himself get involved in the workings of Nature. Both hoped that their preservation would be achieved not through their own efforts, but through the efforts of their lord. This characteristic of the Jewish God remained unchanged throughout the entire history of the Jews. Their God was not a God of freedom or of nature but was the despotic insurer of their national survival in time of need.¹³

Jesus had rebelled against this alien and inhuman God. Prompted by his need for freedom, he had rejected the alien commandments of the Jewish Deity and had stressed human freedom and the divinity of con-

¹⁰ Nohl, 374-377; for the philosophical significance of love see *ibid.*, 377-382.

¹¹ From the autumn of 1798 until the end of 1799, Hegel composed, "Der Geist des Christentums und sein Schicksal," Nohl, 241-342, translated by T. M. Knox in *On Christianity Hegel's Early Theological Writings*, (New York, 1961, H.T.B.), 182-301. As Knox inserts Nohl's pagination into his text, I will continue to cite Nohl: "The Spirit of Christianity" is based in part on two sets of fragments: the first written between January and July, 1797, Nohl, 368-374, the other written in the autumn of 1798, *ibid.*, 385-402.

¹² This parallel is explicit in "Glauben und Sein," Nohl, 385, written at the beginning of 1798.

¹³ Nohl, 244-56, 368-372.

science.¹⁴ When in the course of Christian history "God became man," man became God, and the unity of the divine and the human will become manifest.¹⁵ Morality ceased now to be a body of law and through love became a fluid attitude which affirmed the unity of life. And through belief in the "forgiveness of sins" the status of sinner and saint became relative as against an underlying unity, which could be momentarily broken, but whose wounds would heal.¹⁶ Still, Christianity, which emerged through total rejection of Jewish civic and religious life, had never found its institutional or political expression.¹⁷ From its inception, a negative reaction to the abject dependence of the Jew on his alien God and to the slavish legalism which ensued from this belief, Christianity, though it vindicated human freedom, had not achieved a reconciliation between nature and human freedom. While the Jew was altogether dependent on his "supreme object," the Christian was afraid of the world and unable to come to grips with it.¹⁸

With the exception of his political tracts, Hegel had expended most of his energies from 1797 to 1799 in studying the spiritual implications of Judaism and Christianity. In the course of his research, he had discovered that Christian morality was both more sublime and more in accord with life than was Kantian morality, which was far more akin to the legalism of the Jews. Still, even Christianity had not been able to come to grips with the real life of man. With the exception of his short fragment "On Love," to which we have already alluded, Hegel's *extant* writings were speculative critiques of Christianity and Judaism rather than constructive proposals for a new way of thinking which would enable men to live their lives fully in freedom.¹⁹

If we are to understand how Hegel closed the gap between his early Kantianism and his mature "objective idealism," it is helpful to turn our attention to Hölderlin, who while writing *Empedokles* was concerned with establishing the proper relationship among human freedom, nature and society. The impact of Hölderlin's thinking on Hegel's development was very great. Still it is no accident that unlike Hölderlin's *Empedokles*, Hegel's Frankfurt "theological writings" mark a crisis which resulted eventually in hard social criticism.

By 1800 Hölderlin was even more estranged from German social con-

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 260-266, 371, 386.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 309.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 393.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 342.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 324.

¹⁹ Cf. Rosenzweig, *op. cit.*, 64-66, 80-89.

ditions than before; though he tried valiantly to make his peace with society, he was basically unable to do so. By 1797 solitude had become part of his personality, the vantage point from which he struggled to find his place in the world and the perspective from which his ultimate failure to come to a viable relationship with the world should be evaluated. Hegel's intellectual crisis, on the other hand, which brought him into close intellectual fellowship with Hölderlin, was a crucial, though transient event in the intellectual biography of an extremely social man.

In a letter to Nanette Endel, written in July 1797 six months after he had arrived in Frankfurt, Hegel wrote:

In Bern, I made my peace with myself and others in the arms of nature. Here I often flee to this faithful mother to break with the people with whom I live in peace. Under her aegis, I protect myself from their influence and subvert any community (*Bund*) with them.²⁰

This paradox expresses the ambiance of Hegel's thinking during his years in Frankfurt. In Frankfurt, where he was surrounded by friends and colleagues, Hegel's basic sociability, stifled during his lonely years in Bern, came to the fore once again. Nature was for Hegel a "subversive" force which prevented him from succumbing to the influence of society and abetted him in preserving his own ideals. For Hölderlin and for the protagonist of his new play, *Empedokles*, nature was the first and last recourse from his basic solitude, the perennial friend of the free which could heal the wounds which society made. And this reconciliation with men which nature inspired was only a transitional stage preceding the ultimate reunion of the free man with nature itself.

A similar difference between the presuppositions of Hegel and Hölderlin can be noted if we contrast their usage of the word "life," central to the speculation of both of them during these critical years in their development. For Hegel, "life" was a fundamental unity of which the bifurcations required resolution. In order to preserve the integrity of life Jesus had turned against the "eternal deadness" of the Jews.²¹ For Hölderlin, on the other hand, coming to grips with "life" was a distant ideal for which he struggled as best he could. According to Hölderlin "life" could be endured only if its "privations" were comprehended. And it is the conflict between Hölderlin's inclination towards death and his struggle for life, his desire for reunion with the elements and his emphasis

²⁰ Hegel, *Briefe*, I, 53; cf. Rosenzweig, *op. cit.*, I, 73-74.

²¹ Nohl, 371, cf. Rosenzweig, *op. cit.*, I, 64.

on endurance, the inclusion of a philosophy of work in a theatre of vision, which gives Hölderlin's *Death of Empedokles*²² its unique profundity.

While still living in Frankfurt in 1797, Hölderlin wrote an outline for a play on Empedokles.²³ At this time he conceived of his protagonist as a philosopher inclined from the outset to hate culture, unsatisfied and suffering even under "really beautiful conditions" because they were "particular conditions."²⁴ In this "Plan," Empedokles first retires into solitude because he is annoyed by the behavior of his fellow citizens. Upon hearing, however, that his countrymen have erected a statue in his honor, he returns. His enemies instigate trouble against him, his statue is overthrown and he is exiled. Now Empedokles prepares himself for death. Significantly enough Hölderlin promises that these accidental reasons for his suicide will recede as Empedokles realizes that his death in Aetna grows necessarily out of the innermost core of his being.

When Hölderlin began to compose the First Version of *The Death of Empedokles*²⁵ after November 1798, he modified his original plan considerably. In one vital respect he remained true to his original conception. In all three versions of his play, the relationship between Empedokles and his fellow citizens is dependent on the relationship between the philosopher and elemental nature. Quite unlike Hyperion, who is always in search of fellowship, Empedokles is from the outset self-sufficient and at peace with his own solitude. As he appears at the beginning of the First Version, he is tormented by his alienation from those elemental forces which previously have imbued him with strength.²⁶ To his fellow citizens, this estrangement of Empedokles from nature appears to be a loss of his charisma, and they fall prey to the subtleties of his priestly enemies and exile him. In the course of his wanderings, Empedokles regains his contact with the elements through drinking the water of a spring. Interpreting this as a sign, he decides that it is his destiny to be reunited with the elements.²⁷

In an encounter with his people, Empedokles, with his charisma now restored, trounces his conservative enemies and liberates his people from their chains by presenting to them his fate as a metaphor of their own

²² G.S.A., IV₁, 145-148.

²³ See G.S.A., IV₁, 369.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 145.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1-85; for date when Hölderlin began the First Version see *ibid.*, 333.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 14-16.

²⁷ For Empedokles's exile, *ibid.*, 22-32; for Empedokles at the stream, *ibid.*, 51-54; the structure of elemental forces in the First Version has been dealt with by me in "Hölderlin's *Der Tod des Empedokles*, First Version," Harvard Honors Thesis, Harvard University Archives, 1959.

political emancipation. As he is going to reunite himself physically with the elements, they are capable of rejuvenating themselves by "rethinking their own origins" and modeling their institutions after the beauty of nature. In short, Empedokles hopes that his death will inspire them to return to nature.²⁸

The political counterpart of Empedokles' suicide is political revolution. Still, however suggestive Empedokles' analogy between his coming suicide and the political rejuvenation of his people may be, his decision is prompted neither by anger with his people nor by a sense of political mission. Empedokles' fate in the first Version is brought on by his awareness that the intimacy with the elements which he has regained is precarious and that his reunion with them can be total only if he freely unites himself with them.²⁹

In order to temper the suicidal *motif* in his tragedy, Hölderlin insisted that Empedokles' motive was not of universal import but was the philosopher's response to specific historical circumstances. Even his impatience with social experience, his lust for total insight and his solitude were outgrowths of the Sicilian cultural landscape which would have been completely out of place in the more civilized context of Fifth Century Athens. This point is made clearly by an uninvolved and therefore trustworthy visitor from Athens. This visitor, called Delia, insists that unlike Empedokles, Sophocles did know how to distinguish between the fragmentary, time-bound thoughts appropriate to mortals and the comprehensive view of the immortal gods. Still, it is only through the use of such minor characters, through occasional allusions to Athens in the soliloquies of Empedokles and through the use of imagery, that Hölderlin in the First Version indicates his own doubts as to the validity of Empedokles' stance and the legitimacy of his suicide.³⁰

In the Second Version of *Empedokles*,³¹ written in the spring of 1799, the true distinction between God and man becomes central to the play. Empedokles, goaded on by his fellow countrymen, commits the sin of blasphemy by proclaiming himself to be a god. Aware of the sinfulness of this *hubris* and driven to desperation, he seeks for a way to expiate his sin.³² By the end of this extremely brief fragment, Empedokles has decided that the only way in which he can expiate his sin is through his own death.

²⁸ G.S.A. IV₁, 57-75.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 79, verses 1880-1883.

³⁰ See Nauen, *op. cit.*

³¹ "Der Tod des Empedokles, ein Trauerspiel in fünf Acten," G.S.A. IV₁, 90-117.

³² For Empedokle's blasphemy, see *ibid.*, 94-96; for his contrition, *ibid.*, 103; much is made of Hölderlin's "Wort-schuld" by Paul Böckmann, *Hölderlin und seine Götter*, Munich, 1935.

Stemming from his wish for total vision, his pride has destroyed his communion with elemental forces. Only by reuniting himself physically with the elements can he make his peace with the gods.

In sharp contrast to the First Version, the fate of Empedokles is not exemplary but prohibitive. In a letter written at just this time to Christian Gottfried Schutz, Hölderlin argued that poetry should not commit idolatry by making gods of men or men of gods but should bring gods and men closer together. Tragedy achieved this "per contrarium."³³ Empedokles, who at the beginning of the tragedy seems to be a god, suffers a fate which enables him to speak the truth about the human condition. By the end of the fragment, Empedokles, whose own fate can work itself out only through his death, is able to see that the proper role of man in the world is to struggle to foster and promote the work of nature through his own individual labor:

Mit Ruhe wirken soll der Mensch,
 der sinnende, soll entfaltend
 Das Leben um ihn fördern und heitern denn hoher Bedeutung voll,
 Voll schweigender Kraft umfängt
 Den ahnenden, dass er bilde die Welt,
 Die grosse Natur,
 Dass ihren Geist hervor er rufe, strebt
 Tief wurzelnd
 Das gewaltige Sehnen ihm auf,
 Und viel vermag er und herrlich ist,
 Sein Wort, er wandelt die Welt
 Und unter den Händen . . .³⁴

This humanistic conception of the vocation of man, which Hölderlin hoped would be the cathartic residue in the mind of the spectator, received its most eloquent expression and justification in a long letter which

³³ G.S.A. VI₁, 382; this letter is undated; for establishing its date see *ibid.*, VI₂, 1002; I find Beck's arguments unconvincing, however.

³⁴
 Pondering man should work and act in peace;
 Should manifold, further and cheer
 The life about him.
 Great Nature full of silent force envelops
 The foreknowing One that he build the world.
 Deeply rooted, a mighty yearning
 Strives so that he calls forth her Spirit.
 And he can do much and glorious is
 His Word; it transforms the world
 And under his hands . . . (G.S.A. IV₁, 110)

Cf. the very poor translation in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, Michael Hamburger, trans. (London, 1966), 305.

he wrote to his brother just as he was completing the fourth act of his tragedy.³⁵

The letter begins with Hölderlin musing on his own supersensitive nature. Inclined to be hurt beyond measure by the insensitivity, i.e., personal failings of others, Hölderlin wonders whether he himself is not at fault for being so open to the *lacunae* in the personality of others. Perhaps he can help himself by learning to see these faults as “specific,” well delineated faults. But the same supersensitivity which has made him vulnerable to the failings of others has also sharpened his sense for human excellence. Characteristically, Hölderlin is not very sure that this new insight will really enable him to come to terms with his own immediate *Umwelt*. The lot of those whom “nature has educated for humanity” is more unhappy then it was “in other times and places.”

For the barbarians about us tear down our best powers before they have been fully formed. Only a clear deep insight into our destiny can save us so that we do not pass away in dishonor. By seeking the excellent and sticking by it, and in this way strengthening our feelings and curing ourselves, we can gain the strength to recognize in the raw, twisted and misconceived, not only what pains us, but its true character, its specific privation.³⁶

This theory of “specific privation,” Hölderlin continued, when applied to the larger sphere of human activity and human history is the key to the proper comprehension of human affairs. For not only the authentic but the inauthentic, not only the “excellent” but the “perverted” modes of human activity reveal that all men do in fact have the same basic character. And seen from this perspective, not only human excellence but all human activity can be derived from the same elemental drive in human nature. The fundamental instinct of man is to contribute to the work of nature by improving the world about him. Though most men are unconscious of this instinct and seem to copy the original achievements of others, even this copying implies a latent understanding of the irradicable element in human nature. In the “activity” and “character” of the great and the humble, Hölderlin finds the same “Urcharacter,” the same destiny. Even war and economic enterprise serve to fulfill the destiny of man, which is to “multiply, propel, distinguish and mix together the life of Nature.”³⁷

If we compare Hölderlin’s theory of “specific privation” with the arguments in Hegel’s “Preface”³⁸ to the “German Constitution,” writ-

³⁵ June 4, 1799, *ibid.*, VI₁, 326-332.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 327.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 328.

³⁸ Rosenkranz, *op. cit.* 88-90.

ten about six months later, we can note some *striking* similarities. Both texts are concerned with bringing intellectuals into *rappor*t with concrete human experience. Both texts start with the same assumption that the position of the intellectual alienated from the real world is highly precarious; Hegel even calls this condition “an eternal death.”³⁹ And both texts argue that a new comprehension of reality, which will comprehend the reasonable core of the irrational, will enable man to find a way to relate his ideals to the real world about him. Indeed Hölderlin’s theory of “specific privations” is only another expression for what Hegel called the “metaphysics” which would put the forms of real experience into their true perspective by showing their limitations within a consistent rational whole.⁴⁰

Still, Hölderlin never applied this method to contemporary politics. Primarily an ethical theory, Hölderlin applied it to the behavior of human individuals and only in a vague way to the behavior of human societies. It was the immense achievement of Hegel to apply this method to the phenomenon of political society in crisis and so inaugurate a new era not only in political thought, but in the history of philosophy as well.

In the letter to his brother, Hölderlin was trying desperately to find the link of common humanity between the intellectual elite and the barbarians who threatened their spiritual existence. By the close of 1799, however, Hölderlin’s faith in human nature had been shattered.⁴¹ Shaken by Napoleon’s coup d’état⁴² and by the complete failure of his own efforts to found a literary journal which would secure his independence,⁴³ Hölderlin now perceived that individuals on their own initiative could achieve nothing in the context of political and cultural collapse.⁴⁴ His theory of specific privation had, however, been rooted firmly in his own individualistic bias and purported to meet psychological and ethical rather than political ends. Attempting now to come to grips with the phenomenon of crisis, he ignored his ethical theory and mused on the role of the world-historical person as a bridge between two distinct eras.⁴⁵

By June 1799 Hölderlin had completed four acts of the Second Ver-

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 88-89.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁴¹ Letter from Hölderlin to Johann Gottfried Ebel, November, 1799, *Ibid.*, VI₁, 377.

⁴² Hölderlin to his mother, November 16, 1799, *ibid.*, 374.

⁴³ Hölderlin to Susette Gontard, September, 1799, *ibid.*, 366.

⁴⁴ Hölderlin to Ebel, November, 1799, *ibid.*, 378.

⁴⁵ See “Das Werden im Vergehen,” *ibid.*, IV₁, 282-287, and “Grund zum Empe-dokles,” *ibid.*, 149-162.

sion (almost all of which is no longer extant) and was preparing copy for the press.⁴⁶ Still, he never published this version, and by November 1799 was hard at work writing a completely new version. This Third Version of *Empedokles*⁴⁷ was no longer a tragedy of pride, with a moral of work, but a stupendous myth of death and rebirth, tempered, however, by a new recognition of the rights of authority even in a period of total political and cultural crisis.

Almost liturgical in tone, the Third Version of *Empedokles*, written from November 1799 until the middle of 1800, deals with Empedokles' suicide as a truly exemplary sacrifice.⁴⁸ Shifting the historical setting of the play from the Fifth Century, the high point of Greek achievement, to the Fourth Century, "the close of ancient civilization,"⁴⁹ Hölderlin portrays Empedokles as a philosopher who through his life and death mediates between two historical epochs. His thought contains the quintessence of the world which is passing away; only through his death can the idea of a natural society be transmitted to a new age. Still, this Third Version not only emphasizes the role of the world historical personality as the negative "sacrificial lamb" of world history, but also tries desperately to compensate for the apocalyptic nature of this vision by reasserting the rightful mission of authority. The chief antagonist to Empedokles in this Third Version is his brother. Through maintaining authority and law, and by thinking through the antagonisms and contradictions of his own decaying civilization, his mission is to preserve the unity of nature and society, threatened by the disintegration of culture. The pantheistic mysticism of Empedokles, which culminates in his own reunification with the elements through suicide, is countered in this version by the rationalism and commitment to the existing laws of his royal brother.⁵⁰

Still, dramatically at least, this desperate attempt by Hölderlin to raise Empedokles' royal brother to equivalent status with his hero is a failure. Driven into complete isolation by his own failure to find a niche for himself in German society as a journalist or university professor, Hölderlin could not help identifying himself with the solitary poet philosopher, rather than with his statesman brother. In July 1800, all his hopes shattered, Hölderlin left Homburg for Stuttgart.⁵¹ The remaining

⁴⁶ For chronology see *ibid.*, IV₁, 355-361.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 121-141.

⁴⁸ This is certainly not true of either of the first two versions.

⁴⁹ G.S.A., IV₁, 137, verse 437.

⁵⁰ "Plan der dritten Fassung," *ibid.*, 163-166; for Hölderlin's royal brother, cf. Beda Alleman, *Hölderlin und Heidegger* (Zürich, Freiburg, 1954), 22-26.

⁵¹ Hölderlin's frantic haste to leave Homburg, the scene of so many disappointments,

years of his productive poetic career bear the mark of incredible detachment from the ordinary affairs of men. Like the prophets of old, he viewed the affairs of men with the detachment and compassion which are possible only for those who have broken their pact with society and see it now from the hilltops. Verging on madness, the most profound lyric poet of his day, his vision is no longer accessible to the historian.

Hegel, on the other hand, returned to the *agora* of politics. Experiencing at first hand both the companionship and the fate of his closest friend, this political and social man succeeded in bridging with his intellect the immense gap between the ideal and the real. Concluding that complete detachment from conventional human affairs was noble "only if involvement would be dishonorable,"⁵² Hegel had turned his attention away from the apolitical figure of Jesus and tried to develop a new method for the comprehension of politics and society.

Hegel discovered in 1800 that historical society, philosophically understood, contained within itself the key for its own rebirth. Hegel was both inspired and chastened by witnessing the valiant attempt of his close friend, Hölderlin, to come to grips through intense intellectual effort with the crisis of his own earlier republican ideals. Despairing of the present epoch, Hölderlin, unable to compromise his earlier values, eventually hypostatized them into the future and assumed the precarious role of prophet. Hegel, more modest and "sensible" decided, at all costs, to make his peace with reality and attempt to find within it the contradictions which if resolved would restructure reality in accord with reason.⁵³

is evident from his letter to his mother, May 23, 1800, G.S.A. VI₁, 389-391; for the first signs of mental *unbalance* see *ibid.*, VI₂, 1021-1024.

⁵² "Systemfragment von 1800," *Nohl*, 351.

⁵³ In order to achieve this ambitious goal Hegel decided to join forces with Schelling who also was philosophically committed to the total comprehension of reality. Schelling, however, at this time was primarily concerned with the philosophy of nature. The study of political and social reality appeared to Hegel to be a lacuna in Schelling's work which he might fill. Impelled by the insight that a new metaphysics was required if social reality was to be comprehended and believing that Schelling, concerned with comprehending the world as a totality, was at the forefront of idealist speculation, Hegel decided to collaborate with him in presenting a new concrete philosophy of reality to the public. Hegel's decision to collaborate with Schelling is recorded in his letter to Schelling of November 2, 1800, Hegel, *Briefe*, I, 58-60. As Hegel and Schelling had drifted apart after 1796, Hegel was not without some misgivings. He concluded his letter by stating, "Though I wish and hope to get together with you, I must however know to honor destiny and await from its favor how we will meet each other." This reserve is in marked contrast to the ecstatic tone of Hegel's poem "Eleusis" which he sent to Hölderlin in August 1796, immediately prior to their reunion in Frankfurt; Hegel, *Briefe*, I, 38-40. The best discussion of the relationship between Schelling and Hegel after 1800 is still in Haym, *Hegel und seine Zeit*, 124-231.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Note

Only those texts, books and articles which have been cited in the footnotes or which have otherwise proven useful in preparing this study will be listed in the bibliography. For additional bibliography consult Alessandro Pellegrini, *Friedrich Hölderlin, Sein Bild in der Forschung*, Berlin, 1965; the book reviews in *Hegel-Studien*; and the bibliography at the end of Walter Kaufmann, *Hegel, Reinterpretation, Texts and Commentary*, New York, 1965.

PRIMARY SOURCES

- Fichte, J. G., *Ausgewählte Werke in sechs Bänden*, Fritz Medicus, ed. Leipzig, 1911-1912. Cited as Fichte, *Werke*. More critical and complete than the following standard edition.
- Fichte, J. G., *Sämtliche Werke*, J. H. Fichte, ed. 8 vol. Berlin, 1845-1846. Cited as Fichte, *Sämtliche Werke*.
- Fichte, J. G., *Briefwechsel*. Hans Schulz, ed. 2 vol. Leipzig, 1925.
- Fichte, J. G., *Gesamtausgabe der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*. Richard Lauth and Hans Jacob, ed. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1965; vol. I, Pt. II. Only a few volumes of this extremely critical edition have been published to date.
- Flatt, Johann Friedrich, *Briefe über den moralischen Erkenntnisgrund der Religion überhaupt und besonders in Beziehung auf die Kantische Philosophie*. Tübingen, 1789.
- Hegel, G. W. F., *Briefe von und an Hegel*. J. Hoffmeister, ed. 4 vol. Hamburg, 1952. When possible, other letter collections are preferable; the footnotes are very inaccurate. Henceforth cited as Hegel, *Briefe*.
- Hegel, G. W. G., *Differenz des Fichte'schen und Schelling'schen Systems der Philosophie*. G. Lasson, ed. Hamburg, 1962.
- Hegel, G. W. F., *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*. J. Hoffmeister, ed. Stuttgart, 1936. Cited as Hegel, *Dokumente*. Primarily a collection of Hegel fragments. To be used in conjunction with Gisela Schüller, "Zur Chronologie von Hegels Jugendschriften," *Hegel-Studien*, II, (1963), 111-159.
- Hegel, G. W. F., *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*. J. Hoffmeister, ed. 4th edition. Hamburg, 1962.
- Hegel, G. W. F., *Hegels Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie*, Georg

- Lasson, ed. Leipzig, 1913. This volume contains texts and notes not included in *Political Writings*, translated by T. M. Knox.
- Hegel, G. W. F., *Hegels theologische Jugendschriften*. Herman Nohl, ed. Tübingen, 1907. Cited as *Nohl*. To be used in conjunction with Gisela Schüler; see Hegel, *Dokumente* above. The best collection of Hegel's early essays in print, though editorial insertions often give arguments a theological emphasis which they do not merit in their own right. The arrangement of the texts is most unsatisfactory and not only on occasion misleading but hard to follow. This edition will soon be obsolete with the appearance of the new edition of *Hegels Jugendschriften* prepared by the Hegel Archiv.
- Hegel, G. W. F., *On Christianity, Early Theological Writings*. T. M. Knox, trans. NY, 1961 (Harper Torchbook). Contains a translation of Nohl's text of "Die Positivität der Christlichen Religion," and "Der Geist des Christentums und sein Schicksal," without the notes which contain much material which Hegel deleted from his manuscript.
- Hegel, G. W. F., *Political Writings*, T. M. Knox, trans. Oxford, 1964. Contains a translation of "On the Recent Domestic Affairs of Württemberg," p. 243-245.
- Hegel, G. W. F., *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, Stuttgart, 1961.
- Hölderlin, Friedrich, *Hölderlin-Grosse Stuttgarter Ausgabe*. F. Beissner, ed. 7 v. Stuttgart, 1944-1968. Cited as G.S.A. One of the finest critical editions of a poet in any language. The text is impeccable, the notes, illuminating. The 6th and 7th vols., edited by Adolf Beck, contain much biographical data. The remaining volumes, edited by Beissner, contain several lengthy articles on the history of *Hyperion* and *Empedokles*.
- Kant, Immanuel, *Werke in sechs Bänden*. W. Weischedel, ed. Frankfurt am Main, 1954-1964. This *Insel* edition of Kant is extremely critical and contains all of Kant's published writings; it supercedes in my opinion the unwieldy *Akademie Ausgabe*.
- Lessing, G. E., *Lessings Werke* (Cotta edition). 6 v. Stuttgart, 1869.
- Lessing, G. E., *Über die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn*. Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, ed. Breslau, 1785.
- Schelling, F. W. J., *Aus Schellings Leben in Briefen*. G. L. Plitt, ed. 2 v. Leipzig, 1869. Cited as *Plitt*. Fuhrmans does not reproduce material contained in *Plitt*. The chapter on Schelling's youth and student years was written by Schelling's son. Contains much invaluable material, though the conjectures of the authors are often far afield.
- Schelling, F. W. J., *Briefe und Dokumente*. Horst Fuhrmans, ed. Bonn, 1962; Vol. I. Contains much material not in *Plitt*. The notes are often full of material gleaned from the archive of the Tübinger Stift, and from other inaccessible sources.
- Schelling, F. W. J., *Schellings Werke*, Manfred Schröter, ed. 6 Hauptbände, 6 Ergänzungsbände. Munich 1927. Essentially a reprint of Schelling, *Sämtliche Werke*, K. F. A. Schelling, ed. 14 v. Stuttgart, 1856-1861. A critical edition of Schelling's writings does not exist.
- Schelling, F. W. J., *System des Transzendentalen Idealismus*. Ruth-Eva

- Schulz, ed. Hamburg, 1957. A critical edition of Schelling's most important mature work.
- Schiller, Friedrich, *Werke in Drei Bänden*. H. G. Göpfert, ed. Munich, 1966.
- Spinoza, Benedict, *The Chief Works*. trans. R. H. M. Elwes, 2 v. N.Y., 1951.

SECONDARY WORKS

- Allemann, Beda, *Hölderlin und Heidegger*, Zürich and Freiburg, 1954. In spite of the title, perhaps the best book on Hölderlin.
- Asveld, P., *La pensée religieuse du jeune Hegel; Liberté et aliénation*. Paris, 1953.
- Beck, Adolf, "Aus der Umwelt des jungen Hölderlins, Stamm und Tagebucheinträge, mitgeteilt und erläutert," *Hölderlin-Jahrbuch*, F. Beissner and P. Kluckhohn, ed. Tübingen (1947) 33-46. A mine of information on Hölderlin's contact with radical students while at the Stift.
- Beck, Adolf, "Hölderlin als Republikaner," *Hölderlin-Jahrbuch*, 1967-68, (Tübingen, 1967) 28-52. A fine discussion of Hölderlin's politics which distinguishes between his diffuse republicanism and the "Jacobinism" ascribed to him by Pierre Bertaux in the same issue of the *Hölderlin-Jahrbuch*.
- Bertaux, Pierre, "Hölderlin und die französische Revolution," *Hölderlin-Jahrbuch*, 1967-68, Tübingen (1967) 1-27. A valiant attempt to portray Hölderlin as a Jacobin who persisted in his radicalism and his admiration for terrorism throughout his creative career; see Beck *above*.
- Betzendörfer, Walter, *Hölderlins Studienjahre im Tübinger Stift*. Heilbronn, 1922. Contains much material on Hölderlin's life while a student; still an antiquarian study which often misses the point.
- Böckmann, Paul, *Hölderlin und Seine Gotter*, Munich, 1935. A standard work on Hölderlin, though not useful for this study.
- Böhm, W., *Hölderlin*. 2 v. Halle/Salle, 1928-1930. Another standard work not useful for this study.
- Carsten, F. L., *Princes and Parliaments in Germany*, Oxford, 1959. Unfortunately very light in his treatment of the affairs of the Württemberg estates after 1770.
- Cassirer, Ernst, *Idee und Gestalt*, Berlin, 1921. The essay on Hölderlin is brilliant though undermined by recent developments in Hölderlin philology.
- Delorme, M., *Hölderlin et la Révolution Française*. Monaco, 1959. Very disappointing.
- Dilthey, Wilhelm, *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung*. Leipzig and Berlin, 1913. The first work to attempt an interpretation of Hölderlin within the context of German idealism. Largely superceded by the advances in Hölderlin philology.
- Dilthey, Wilhelm, *Die Jugendgeschichte Hegels*. Berlin, 1906. Dilthey inspired Nohl and Rosenzweig and thus inaugurated the revival of Hegel philology and a renewed interest in Hegel's early writings. *Die Jugendgeschichte* became obsolete in light of the new findings and the new chronology which resulted from the new Hegel philology.
- Droz, Jacques, *L'Allemagne et la Révolution Française*. Paris, 1949. Still the

- best study of Germany and the French Revolution. Contains much material not otherwise easily available.
- Epstein, Klaus, *The Genesis of German Conservatism*. Princeton, 1967. Vol. I. This brilliant work by the late Professor Epstein does not deal with the matters dealt with in this study. Though he dealt with many regions of Germany, Württemberg is not dealt with in depth.
- Flitner, W. A., *A. L. Hülsen und der Bund der freien Männer*. Jena, 1913.
- Haering, Theodor, *Hegel, sein Wollen und sein Werk*. 2 v. Leipzig, 1929-1938. This extremely lengthy study contains much interesting material, though his conclusions are often drawn from his own fascistic leanings rather than from the evidence.
- Hasselhorn, Martin, *Der altwürttembergische Pfarrstand im 18. Jahrhundert*. Stuttgart, 1958 (*Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Geschichtliche Landeskunde in Baden-Württemberg*, VI). A brilliant sociological study of the role of the Württemberg clergy in 18th century Swabian society.
- Haym, Rudolf, *Hegel und seine Zeit*. Berlin, 1857. Though his arguments are often undermined by advances in Hegel philology, still the most intelligent and exciting book written on Hegel.
- Haym, Rudolf, *Die Romantische Schule*. Berlin, 1870.
- Henrich, Dieter, "Hölderlin über Urteil und Sein. Eine Studie zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des Idealismus," *Hölderlin-Jahrbuch*, 1965-66, Tübingen (1967) 73-96. An important essay for establishing the early date for Hölderlin's philosophical critique of transcendental idealism.
- Henrich, Dieter, "Leutwein über Hegel. Ein Dokument zu Hegels Biographie" *Hegel-Studien* III (1965) 39-77. An excellent source for Hegel's life while at the Stift.
- Herzog Karl Eugen von Württemberg und seine Zeit*. Württembergische Geschichts und Altertums Verein, ed. 2 v. Esslingen, 1909. An invaluable collection of essays by eminent local Württemberg historians containing much otherwise inaccessible material on various aspects of Württemberg government and society in the eighteenth century. Cited as *Herzog Karl-Eugen*.
- Holborn, Hayo, "Der deutsche Idealismus in sozialgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung," *Historische Zeitschrift*, CLXXIV, (1952) 359-384. In spite of its title, this article is not really relevant to the issues dealt with in this study. Holborn argues that German idealism, unlike British protestantism, did not achieve a "consensus" among the Germans of all social stations.
- Hölzle, Erwin, *Das alte Recht und die Revolution*, Munich and Berlin, 1931. In spite of Hölzle's strong emphasis of *Staatsräson* to the exclusion of sociological considerations, still the best book on Württemberg history during the 1790's.
- Hoffmeister, J. H., *Hegel und Hölderlin*. Tübingen, 1931. Very brief, very much on the level of pure ideas.
- Hoffmeister, J., *Hölderlin und die Philosophie*. Leipzig, 1942. One of the best purely philosophical inquiries into the role of Hölderlin in the history of German idealism.
- Hoffmeister, J., "Zum Geistesbegriff des deutschen Idealismus bei Hölderlin und Hegel," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und*

- Geistesgeschichte*, X, (1932), 28-44. Very provocative, though I differ from Hoffmeister on almost all of his conclusions. Schelling, in fact, rather than Hölderlin or Hegel first formulated the concept of *Geist* as it was to be used subsequently by all of the Idealists.
- Hüffer, Hermann, *Der rastatter Congress und die Zweite Coalition*. 2 v. Bonn, 1878.
- Kaufmann, Walter, *Hegel, Reinterpretation, Texts, and Commentary*, New York, 1965. Though full of Hegel lore, this is an introductory volume rather than an analytic study. My chief criticism is that by failing to distinguish between similarities and influence when dealing with notions which Hegel shared with the other outstanding German thinkers of his day, Kaufmann does not tell the story the way it really is. Also, Kaufmann's antipathy for Christianity leads him to distort through omission many of the texts which he translates in this volume.
- Kelly, George Armstrong, *Idealism, Politics and History*, Cambridge, 1969. An excellent study of the political thought and philosophy of history of Rousseau, Kant, Fichte and Hegel, which I was able to consult only as my own manuscript neared completion. Kelly, however, does not deal with the early thought of Hegel and suggests, wrongly I think, that Hegel came to his mature conclusions largely influenced by Kant and Fichte. Kelly also tends to focus almost entirely on the conservative aspects of Hegel's thought and overlooks the tension between these and other more radical – and I suggest more basic undercurrents.
- Kirchner, Werner, *Der Hochverratsprozess gegen Sinclair*, Marburg, Lahn, 1949. An excellent study of the political atmosphere which surrounded Hölderlin after 1800.
- Klaiber, Julius, *Hölderlin, Hegel und Schelling in ihren schwäbischen Jugendjahren*. Stuttgart, 1877. An extremely modest though useful book by a Swabian antiquarian.
- Knittermeyer, Hinrich, *Schelling und die Romantische Schule*, Munich, 1929. By far the best book on Schelling, though completely devoid of any historical insight.
- Krieger, Leonard, *The German Idea of Freedom*. Boston, 1957. An outstanding work on German intellectual history. As the chapter on Hegel does not deal with his early writings, only the chapter on Kant is relevant to this study. Krieger overemphasizes somewhat the changes which took place in Kant's thinking on politics in the nineties and the role which the French Revolution played in Kant's political thought.
- Krieger, L., "Kant and the Crisis of Natural Law," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XXVI, (1965) 191-210. A fine essay, which locates Kant's thinking on the natural law within the entire tradition. Krieger, however, does not distinguish between the central role of Kant's conception of the natural law in his political thought and the peripheral role of Kant's political thought within the entire tradition of thinking on the natural law.
- Lang, Wilhelm, *Graf Reinhard, ein deutsch-französisches Lebensbild*, Bamberg, 1896.
- Leube, Martin, "Die Geistige Lage im Stift in den Tagen der französischen Revolution," *Blätter für württembergische Kirchengeschichte*, Neue Folge

- XXXIX, (1935). The best study of the Stift during the years when Schelling, Hölderlin and Hegel studied there; it does not concern itself, however, with these three students in particular.
- Leube, Martin, *Geschichte des Tübinger Stifts*, 3 v. Stuttgart, 1932-36 (*Blätter für württembergische Kirchengeschichte, Sonderhefte* I, III, V). The best history of the Stift.
- Lukács, Georg, *Goethe und seine Zeit*. Bern, 1947. Very provocative, though Lukács overemphasizes Hölderlin's Jacobinism in his essay on Hölderlin's *Hyperion*.
- Lukács, Georg, *Der junge Hegel*. Berlin, 1954. A fine marxist study. Lukács tries too hard to link Hegel and Robespierre rather than trying to comprehend Hegel's theological writings within the context of the French religious movements of the post-thermidorian period. Also Hegel's acceptance of bourgeois society after 1798 is seen as an abrupt change in his thought, which it certainly was not.
- Marcuse, Herbert, *Reason and Revolution*. Boston, 1960. Still the best book on Hegel in English. By failing to remember that "Das älteste Systemfragment" was written not by Hegel but by Schelling, Marcuse tends to syncretize Schelling's early anarchism with Hegel's early politics.
- Medicus, Fritz, *Fichtes Leben*. Leipzig, 1914. The best book on Fichte by far.
- Meinecke, Friedrich, *Die Idee der Staatsräson in der neueren Geschichte*. Translated by Douglas Scott as *Machiavellism*. New York, 1965. The chapter on Hegel is brilliant, though Meinecke's failure to comprehend the new chronology of Hegel's writings leads him astray.
- Michel, Wilhelm, *Das Leben Friedrich Hölderlins*. Bremen, 1940. The best biography of Hölderlin, based unfortunately on easily accessible sources. Must be revised in light of Adolf Beck's research in conjunction with G.S.A. VI and VII.
- Müller, Ernst, *Hölderlin-Studien zur Geschichte seines Geistes*. Stuttgart, 1944. A brilliant study which clarifies many difficult issues in interpreting Hölderlin. Balanced and judicious.
- Peperzak, Adrien T. B., *Le jeune Hegel et la vision morale du monde*. The Hague, 1960. A very careful exegesis of some of Hegel's early writings.
- Pöggeler, Otto, "Hegel und die Griechische Tragodie," *Hegel-Studien*, Beiheft I, (1964) 285-307.
- Rosenkranz, Karl, *G. W. F. Hegels Leben*, Berlin, 1844. The first major biography of Hegel. Since many of Hegel's manuscripts were subsequently lost, Rosenkranz is still indispensable to the student of the early Hegel.
- Rosenzweig, Franz, *Hegel und der Staat*. 2 v. Munich and Berlin, 1920. The best book on Hegel's politics, though Rosenzweig's impatience to reach Hegel's mature glorification of the state leads him to distort the meaning of several important manuscripts.
- Rosenzweig, Franz, *Kleinere Schriften*. Berlin, 1937.
- Schüler, Gisela, "Zur Chronologie von Hegels Jugendschriften," *Hegel-Studien*, II (1963) 111-159. Until the Hegel Archiv publishes its edition of *Hegels Jugendschriften* this essay must be used to arrange properly the texts collected in *Rosenkranz, Dokumente* and *Nohl*.
- Sichirollo, Livio, "Hegel und die Griechische Welt," *Hegel-Studien*, Beiheft, I, (1964) 263-283.

- Staiger, Emil, *Der Geist der Liebe und das Schicksal*. Frauenfeld/Leipzig, 1935. A brilliant very short book by an eminent literary critic which while highly suggestive is devoid of historical insight. The only other existing study of the relationship between Hegel, Schelling and Hölderlin.
- Troeltsch, Ernst, "The Idea of Natural Law and Humanity in World Politics," in Otto Gierke, *Natural Law and the Theory of Society, 1500-1800*, (Cambridge, 1958) 201-222.
- Wahl, J., *Le malheur de la conscience dans la philosophie de Hegel*. Paris, 1929.
- Wohlwill, Adolf, *Weltbürgertum und Vaterlandsliebe der Schwaben*. Hamburg, 1875. This extremely short book contains much information on Württemberg intellectual history not contained in any other study. Especially useful for its discussion of such radicals as Staudlin.
- Wolff, Hans Matthias, *Die Weltanschauung der deutschen Aufklärung in geschichtlicher Entwicklung*, Bern, 1949. By far the best book on the course of the early *Aufklärung* and its place in German social history. Though it does not deal with the issues dealt with in this study, I found it useful for preliminary orientation.
- Zinkernagel, Franz, *Die Entwicklungsgeschichte von Hölderlins Hyperion*. Strassburg, 1907. Strictly a history of the text of *Hyperion*, largely obsolete due to subsequent philological research.